

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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NEW YORK, APRIL 28, 1920.

Price 7 Cents

TWENTY BOY SPIES; OR, THE SECRET BAND OF DISMAL HOLLOW.

*A STORY OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION BY GEN. JAS. A. GORDON.
AND OTHER STORIES*



Ten young patriots stood in front of him, eight paces distant, with rifles in their hands. "John Griswold," cried the captain, in clear ringing tones, "you have five minutes to live, ere you die the death of a traitor!"

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TWENTY BOY SPIES

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THE SECRET BAND OF DISMAL HOLLOW

By GEN. JAS. A. GORDON

CHAPTER I.

THE EXECUTION

"Are you guilty or not guilty?"

"Not guilty, captain."

"Then may you prove your innocence, John Griswold. Let the accuser face the accused and take the oath to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, under penalty of death for perjury!"

"I am the accuser, captain—I am ready to be sworn."

"Hold up your right hand, then."

"It is up, captain."

"Do you solemnly swear under pain of death to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, in this charge against John Griswold—so help you God?"

"I do."

"Then tell your story, and forget not for a moment that the life of one of the band is at stake, and also the liberties of our country which we have sworn to defend with our lives."

"I shall not forget, captain. I know that I imperil my own life in making this charge against the prisoner, who has been my friend ever since we have known each other. But my duty to my country, and the strict observance of my oath when I joined this band impel me to make this charge. On Tuesday last Marlowe and I were scouting over on the south side of the James. We saw several parties of the enemy, and kept them in sight all day, hoping that when night came we should be able, under cover of darkness, to get near enough to hear what might be said by some of them. It soon became evident to us that they were trying to get hold of some of our people from whom they could get some information as to what was going on in our lines, and—"

"Stop a moment, please," interrupted the captain. "Let us understand as we go along. How do you know what the object of the enemy was?"

"From what we saw him do and heard him say."

"And what was that?"

"They stopped everybody that came along the roads and asked no end of questions as to where the rebels were, how many soldiers we had, and whether we were going anywhere soon."

"You saw and heard them?"

"Yes, captain, several times during the day."

"Very well. Go on with your story."

"When night came on Marlowe and I made up our minds that we would give them a sample of that kind of work. We saw them go into camp on the Graves plantation, and, as it was very dark we managed to get up pretty close to them. We could see that they did not suspect any patriots of being in many miles of them. Just as soon as they finished their supper their captain, who was no other than the notorious Bolton of infamous memory, took one of his troopers aside near the spring where we were concealed in a thicket, and

taking a small packet from the bosom of his coat, said: 'Martin, I want you to slip away and take this to the captain of the ship below. It is very important, and you must place it in his hands before sunrise, even if your life pays the price of it. Get away in ten minutes now. It has been brought by our friend on the other side.'

"'Captain,' said the trooper, as he took the package, 'I shall obey your orders even if it cost me my life,' and with that he went back to the camp-fire. We made up our minds that the packet he bore should never reach the captain of any British ship. We kept our eyes on him. Every movement of his was noticed. We saw him go into the bushes and divest himself of his uniform, and leave the red suit lying there. Then he appeared for all the world like a farmer of the neighborhood, much to our surprise. As he glided away into the woods we did likewise, knowing in which direction he was going. Marlowe and I hastened to a certain point below where we knew he would pass. There we awaited his coming. In a little while he came along, and we halted him. Of course, he was the best patriot in the world, and the hard things he said about King George and his soldiers almost made us believe that we had made a mistake in stopping him. But when we insisted upon searching him, he objected and showed fight, saying that, as a patriot he would fight before submitting to such an indignity. Marlowe knocked him on the head, and then we bound him hard and fast. Marching him into a dense part of the woods, we made a fire, and proceeded to search him for the packet we had seen his captain give him. I found him trying to squirm away from me whenever my hand came near the packet. That guided me, and so I soon found it. On opening it to see what its contents were, I found it to be a very complete report of the situation of our forces, and the operations of the members of this Secret Band of Dismal Hollow."

"Eh? What?" exclaimed the captain, half-rising from his seat. "A report of the operations of this band, did you say?"

"Yes, captain, and the name of every member, save one."

"Which one was that?"

"The prisoner—John Griswold."

"Ah! but that does not prove him a traitor," said the captain. "Go on; let us hear all, if you have more to say."

"I have much more to say, captain," continued the accuser. "Among the other papers in the packet I found a copy of the report I had sent to you by the hand of John Griswold!"

"Ah!" and the captain looked at the prisoner. "A copy, did you say?"

"Yes, captain, a true copy, word for word, and in the same handwriting as the report made to be given to the captain of the British ship in the river below."

"Ah! Be careful now! Are you sure of that?"

"I have them here, captain, and the handwriting is that of John Griswold, the prisoner."

"If that is true, then John Griswold is a traitor!" exclaimed the captain.

"Yes, a traitor!" exclaimed eighteen other voices.

"Here are the papers!" and the accuser laid them on the rough table around which twenty young patriots, with masks on their faces, were sitting. Only the face of the bound prisoner, at the farther end of the table, was unmasked.

They were passed to the captain, who examined them, and then sent around the table to be inspected by each individual, "Go on, accuser," said the captain, in a hoarse voice.

"Marlowe and I saw that something was wrong. The prisoner was a spy, as he was caught without his uniform. We tried him by court-martial on the spot, and condemned him to the fate of such. He would make no statement, save to threaten us with the vengeance of Cornwallis and all the king's troops. We carried out the sentence of the court, and then proceeded to hunt up the prisoner. We found him up on the Pamunky, pretending to be at work for the cause. We arrested him. He pretended the utmost surprise, and managed to throw a sealed packet into the fire, where it was consumed ere we could rescue it. We brought him here, and I made the charge of treason against him. I denounce John Griswold as a traitor to this Secret Band of Dismal Hollow, and therefore a traitor to his country, in that he has given our secrets to the enemy, and endeavored to give them aid and comfort in their efforts to conquer us."

"And I say that in making that charge thou liest in thy throat, Al Stevens!" exclaimed the prisoner, his face flushed and eyes flashing.

"Henry Marlowe is my witness," returned the accuser. "Henry Marlowe, stand on thy feet and say whether or not I have spoken the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

A masked form rose to its feet in the middle of the row of masked figures on the right-hand side of the long table, and said, holding up his right hand:

"I am ready to be sworn, captain."

The captain administered the oath as he had to the accuser.

"The accuser has told the truth," said the masked figure, "and nothing but the truth, for I was with him, and have personal knowledge whereof he has spoken, and in defense of which I am ready to stake my life."

"And thou liest, too!" cried the prisoner in fierce tones. The mask sat down and glared at him as if to look him out of countenance.

"John Griswold," said the captain, addressing the prisoner, "I know thee for a valiant man, knowing nothing of fear in the presence of an enemy, for I have been with thee in many a hard struggle when our lives depended on the good blows we gave. On Monday thou didst deliver to me the dispatch sent by the accuser. The words of that dispatch are the same as those in the packet which were taken from the British spy. Not a word or syllable is missing. It is an exact copy of the one you gave me, and in your handwriting, with which every member of the band is familiar. Now, your life depends on your explanation of this fact. What have you to say? Your comrades are listening."

"I am bound, captain," said the prisoner. "I refuse to speak with fetters on my limbs."

"Unbind him. Let him be free to speak what he will."

Two masked figures on either side of him unbound him.

He rose to his feet and said:

"Captain and comrades, I am no traitor—I am the victim of the hate of two of your number, and——"

"Stop!" sternly ordered the captain. "You are to explain how those two dispatches come to be precisely alike. One is in your handwriting."

"I did not write it."

"If that is true, then somebody saw the original dispatch and copied it after it was given to you. How do you account for that?"

"I know that no one saw it after it was given to me," replied the prisoner.

"Yet it was written by the accuser in the presence of Marlowe and yourself."

"I deny that."

"Both have so stated to me."

"And both have lied!"

"John Griswold, your defense is no defense at all. If you cannot make any better explanation than that your doom is sealed."

"My doom is sealed anyhow, captain," said the prisoner, "for I have no hope of my words having more weight than the sworn falsehoods of two members of the band. Any two members can agree to destroy the entire band, and carry it out one by one, and their victims would be powerless."

"John Giswold, you are a traitor to your country and your comrades. Members of the Secret Band of Dismal Hollow, what is your verdict?"

The entire band rose to its feet, and with one voice pronounced the verdict of:

"Guilty!"

"And the sentence?"

"Death!"

"Let the sentence be carried out, then, without delay!"

The two masked figures on either side of the prisoner laid hold of him and bound him as before.

Then they marched him between them a short distance from the table and stood him against a wall of rock, with his face toward the masked figures in front of him.

Two stood near him holding blazing torches above their heads—for all these proceedings had taken place in a huge cavern, while others stood about with more torches.

The face of the prisoner was that of one who showed no fear of death. He had faced death before, and was not the man to flinch now.

Ten young patriots stood in front of him, eight paces distant, with rifles in their hands.

"John Griswold!" cried the captain, in clear, ringing tones "you have five minutes to live ere you die the death of a traitor. You may speak."

"My curse rest upon you all!" cried the doomed youth.

"Is that all?"

"Yes; do your worst!"

"Ready—aim—fire!"

The ten rifles rang out as one piece, and the young traitor fell forward on his face—dead.

CHAPTER II.

THE SECRET BAND OF DISMAL HOLLOW.

John Griswold's execution took place in a cave in Dismal Hollow, four miles from the James river, on the south side, on the 3d day of July, 1781.

He was one of a secret band of spies, which Oscar Dane, a youth of nineteen years, had organized for the purpose of gathering news of the doings of the enemy and sending it to the generals of the Continental army.

The band was composed of twenty youths of his own age, of true and tried courage. Every one of them had either brothers or fathers in the army, and they had been compelled to stay at home to help look after the families to which they belonged.

The Tories, as the loyalists were called, were engaged in aiding and abetting the enemy in every way they could, and young Oscar Dane became well aware of the fact. He saw that he and his young friends could do the same thing for the patriots, and the organization of the Secret Band of Dismal Hollow was the result of his work.

One day, a few weeks before he organized the band, he went out gunning for deer over in Dismal Hollow. It was a swampy hollow between two ranges of hills, a quarter of a mile wide and three or four long. A creek ran through the swamp, but the growth was so dense and the muddy ooze so deep and slimy that no human being had ever been able to penetrate it any distance.

The range of hills on the south side of the swamp presented an almost perpendicular front of rocky formation nearly the entire length of the Hollow, as the swamp was called.

The rains and frosts of centuries had caused enough of the stone to crumble and fall from the wall of rock to form a sort of beach along the base of the range.

One day, while following a deer, young Oscar Dane made his way along this improvised beach for over a mile, hoping to get a shot at the game.

But he never saw the deer again, and he stopped, fearing to go any farther in that direction. He was about to turn back when he saw a rabbit leap up and run up to the base of the perpendicular wall of rock and disappear underneath a huge boulder which lay against it.

"I guess I can reach under there and pull 'bunnie' out," he said to himself, going over to the boulder and stooping to look under it.

He saw a small dark hole, and concluded that "bunnie" was out of his reach. Yet he picked up a stout stick which was near at hand, and ran it into the hole.

Not routing the rabbit out, he started to pull the stick away. It became fastened between the boulder and the wall of rock. Using a little exertion to extricate it, he was astonished to see it move.

He pulled against the big boulder till it swung back far enough to reveal an opening, or door, in the wall of rock, large enough for a horse to go through!

Oscar was a daring youth. He examined the boulder, and found that it was balanced on a flat stone so well that but little strength was required to move it around.

Placing a small stone under it to keep it open, he drew a pistol and went inside the cave to see what sort of a place it was. But it was too dark in there for him to see very well. He gathered dry fagots and got out his tinder-box. In a few minutes he had a good torch prepared, with which he explored the cavern, for such it proved to be.

It was large enough to shelter a thousand men, with a level floor of hard earth. In the farther end was a spring of clear, cold running water.

"This is a wonderful cave," he said, "where we can all hide ourselves if the enemy comes here."

He went back home, after shutting the door of the cave, and made up his mind to keep his secret till such time as there would be necessity for using it. The time soon came, for when he organized the secret band of spies he told them about it, took them there, and showed them all through it.

They made the long table and the rude seats used there, and made it their refuge and secret headquarters. Nobody not in the secret of its existence could find it—not even as Oscar Dane did, for by placing a small stone in a certain place inside, and in another on the outside, it was locked hard and fast.

The Secret Band of Dismal Hollow had been doing service for the cause of liberty for more than two years at the time of the opening of this story. The dangers through which they had passed and the recognition given them by the best generals of the Continental army caused them to swear to stand or fall together as long as a red-coated soldier was in the land.

Oscar Dane was the captain of the secret band, Al Stevens the first lieutenant, and Ed Marlowe second. They were brave young fellows, who were not afraid to face the muskets of the enemy when called upon to do so.

A few days before the occurrences related in the opening chapter a strong party of the enemy pushed out from a camp on the north side of the river, and proceeded to burn down the homes of the Whigs, as the patriots were called, and carry off all their stock and provisions.

It had for several months been the duty of the young spies to keep a strict lookout for those foraging parties, and send couriers at full speed to report them to the nearest patriot camp.

When they would appear, the young spies sent the news quickly, and patriot soldiers came like lightning to chastise the invaders and drive them back to their camp for refuge.

This particular detachment of redcoats was commanded by a young sprig of English nobility of the name of Arncliffe—a captain in the British army. This young captain had once been quartered in the house of Al Stevens' father. He there saw and fell in love with Bessie, Al's sister.

He pressed his suit ardently, but she was as true as steel, and would not listen to his suit. He made two attempts to reach the house again afterwards, but each time was driven back by the vigilance of the Twenty Boy Spies and the Continental soldiers sent to their assistance by General Morgan, whose headquarters were in Richmond at the time.

On this occasion, one of the young spies dashed in and exclaimed:

"Captain Arncliffe and his redcoats are crossing the river at Ballou's Ferry!"

"How many?" demanded the young captain.

"I don't know—200 or more," was the reply.

"Al, take Marlowe, Griswold, and three others, and go up above Martin's. Send one to General Morgan with the news, and then call our people up that way to arms."

The six men were off in a couple of minutes.

They lost no time in their movements.

"Now the rest of you come with me!" cried the young captain. "We must let them know that they must expect to find us about when they cross the river. They hold the other side at present. This side belongs to us, eh, comrades!"

"Yes—down with the redcoats!" cried the fourteen brave

youths, who sprang into the saddle to follow their young leader.

"Yes, down with them—into graves!" cried Dane. "Come, follow me!"

They rode away, and a half hour later they had gained the main road which led down by Ballou's Ferry, six miles below the plantation of the elder Dane.

The news had spread, and patriots were arming. Old men, with gray hair streaming, and young boys trotting by their sides with guns in their hands, came out to the road and waited for some one to lead them.

The wily British officer, knowing by experience that the longer he delayed his movements the more patriots he would have to fight, hurried his troopers from the ferry up to the main road as fast as he could.

Oscar Dane had reached a spot in the road where sixteen patriots had assembled with squirrel rifles in their hands; that made thirty with the young spies.

"Back into the bushes, all of yiu!" cried Dane. "They'll be here in ten minutes! Be ready, every man of you, and don't fire till I give the order; then let everyone pick his man. If we can empty twenty saddles it will make 'em think a thunder-bolt from Heaven has struck them."

They obeyed him, old and young, for he spoke like one born to lead, and in a few moments the little band disappeared in the woods on the south side of the road.

The troopers came along at a swinging trot.

Young Dane waited till more than two-thirds had gone past, and then sung out:

"Now, comrades, fire!"

Thirty rifles cracked in the bushes, and every bullet found its mark. But several struck the same redcoat, so that but twenty were hit, fourteen of whom pitched headlong from their saddles into the road.

Instantly everything was confusion.

Those that were ahead dashed on, fearing that a dangerous ambuscade was there in the bushes, while those behind, but about thirty or forty in number, wheeled and dashed back for the ferry.

A concealed enemy is always feared by the bravest men, and so it proved to be the case in this instance.

Young Dane was quick to perceive the effect of the fire, and said quickly to his comrades:

"Reload quickly and wait for them."

"But they may charge on us," said one of the farmers.

"Cavalry can't charge through the woods," replied he. "Stand your ground. We have done well."

Captain Arncliffe was stunned by the catastrophe, and halted his troopers a half mile up the road to estimate the amount of damage he had sustained.

He did not know what had become of the forty troops who wheeled and rode back toward the ferry rather than try to ride through the ambush. Fourteen men were lying in the road, and their riderless horses careering here and there in a panic. That made it seem as if something like fifty or sixty of his troopers had fallen, a most terrible loss to sustain in a single volley.

He was a man of quick decision, and lost no time in deciding what to do. There was another road near by which led to Martin's Ferry, nine miles above Ballou's. He would not attempt to fight that ambush, but rush on for Martin's Ferry, burning every Whig house he reached on the way.

"Forward!" he cried, dashing away with his troopers at his heels.

"They are off!" exclaimed young Dane. "Catch those horses and gather up those arms, quick. If we push after those redcoats who went back to the ferry, we can kill or capture the whole batch of 'em!"

The patriots burst from the bushes and caught all the loose horses of the dead troopers but two. Others secured the arms of the fallen and then mounted.

"Come on, now!" cried young Dane. "We've no time to lose," and they dashed away in pursuit of the small party of troopers who had turned back to the ferry.

They rode fast, and came in sight of the demoralized redcoats on the banks of the river. The ferryboat, which was a big flat one, propelled by the ferryman pulling on a rope fastened to a tree on each bank of the stream, was on the other side.

The redcoats sprang from their horses and took shelter behind trees. The patriots did likewise, and a desultory firing began.

Some four or five redcoats had fallen, when one of them sang out that they would surrender.

"Throw down your arms, then," said the young captain of the spies.

They threw down their arms.

"Put 'em in a pile," cried Dane.

They were piled up in a heap.

"Now march up here in the road and keep together, or we'll riddle you."

They obeyed, and every horse and gun was secured.

They were marched a-foot back to the main road. It was then that they saw to what sort of a force they had surrendered—not one of the party a regular soldier.

Their curses were loud and deep, but fate was against them. They could do nothing but submit.

CHAPTER III.

THE HOT WORK OF THE SECRET BAND

On the way back to the main road other patriots came along with the rifles, hastening to join in the attack on the redcoats, till the little force of thirty was increased to half a hundred.

When they heard how it had ended the patriots were mad with joy. They shouted themselves hoarse, and declared that the band of boys were valiant men who were well able to hold their own with the same number of kingsmen any day.

A few hours later a company of Continentals, sent by General Morgan to aid the patriots, galloped up.

"Too late!" cried the young captain of the spies. "They have gone back, and we have these prisoners."

Captain Porter heard the reports of the fight with astonishment.

"You have done well," he said to the band. "I salute you, and hail you as soldiers and comrades."

The boys threw up their caps and cheered. It was the best day's work they had ever done, and they felt proud of it, of course.

A patriot came riding up at this time to say that the troopers were crossing the river up at Martin's Ferry.

"Then I shall go back," said Captain Porter. "and take the prisoners with me. You can keep the arms and horses."

In another hour he was on his way back up the river taking over thirty redcoat prisoners with him.

But some of the Tories, who were angered at the trick which had been played on the troopers, sent word over the river to come over again in the night and they would be led to where the young rebels could be taken in detail and killed or captured.

Burning with a desire for revenge, the captain came over again with his troopers, this time under the cover of darkness, and had reached the home of the parents of one of the young members of the band ere their presence was suspected.

The house was surrounded, and the young spy captured. Then the house was burned to the ground and the family turned out into the woods.

The light of the burning home was the signal for the gathering of the patriots again. The Twenty Boy Spies—thirteen in number, quickly assembled, and, protected by darkness, began to pepper the redcoats with merciless pertinacity.

The fire was returned, flash for flash, in the darkness. The redcoats were mounted. The patriots were on foot and behind trees, hence the former suffered most in the desultory firing.

They reached another house and set fire to it. In the light of the burning building Captain Arncliffe turned to his prisoner and said:

"You must lead us to the headquarters, or the hiding-place, of your band."

"I won't do it," replied the brave fellow.

"You may take your choice of doing so, or dangle from yonder limb."

"Let me dangle, then," said the young patriot. "I won't turn traitor to save my life. My comrades will avenge me."

"Very well. I'll show you how we serve traitors to the king. Sergeant, hang this rebel to that limb up there."

The redcoat sergeant proceeded to use a halter for that purpose.

He had made one end of it fast to the young patriot's neck, when he dropped dead with a bullet in his head.

The young captain ordered a charge in the direction of the flash of the single rifle, and it was made.

But a volley of rifles told him that more than one rifle was there. The chargers reeled back with seven men less than when they started.

Just two minutes later another shower of bullets came, and several more were hit, the captain himself being one of the number, catching a bullet in his left shoulder.

"Men," he cried out, "mount all and fall back to the ferry."

That caused a panic, and they mounted and fled like the wind, dashing down the road at full speed leaving the young spy standing there under the tree with the halter still around his neck.

Oscar was the first one to reach his side.

"Ah, you are true blue, comrade!" he cried, grasping his hand. "You, of all, have shown the most courage."

"I'd die before I'd betray the band," said the young spy.

"I believe you."

Just then a Tory who had been captured was brought up into the light of the burning building.

"He went over after the redcoats," said one of the band. "I made him own up."

"Then swing him up to that limb."

The halter was taken from the neck of the young patriot and made fast to the neck of the Tory. In a few minutes he was dangling to the limb.

The patriots were now aroused, and before sunrise over one hundred rifles had come to the place where the light of the fire was seen.

The next day a body of Hessian soldiers was sent over, and things began to look blue for the patriots. Courier after courier was sent up the river to General Morgan for help.

The patriots had to fall back, as the enemy was too strong for them to attack. The British officers were cautious, fearing the patriots were stronger than they were.

A detachment of horses was sent to aid the patriots. The secret band welcomed the assistance, and joined with the soldiers. It was soon ascertained that several ships had come up from below and landed the Hessians. In a few hours the Hessians found themselves cut off from the ships by the patriot spies and the detachment sent out to meet them.

They turned and showed fight, and in twenty minutes they were utterly routed and scattered through the woods.

"Now is your time, boys!" said Oscar. "Go in squads of a half-dozen or more and shoot down every redcoated Hessian you see! I want six to go with me."

They rallied around him, and they darted away toward the residence of a well-known Tory two miles away. He half suspected that some of the Tories would meet there to give aid and comfort to the defeated Hessians.

He had not made any mistake.

When he came in sight of the house he found four Hessians going in. Their red coats were seen but for a moment.

"Let's hide in the woods till night," he said to his men, "and see what old Dilworth will do. I knew he was a rank old Tory, though I heard him talking very sweetly to my father one day about what a good and great man General Washington was."

They hid in the woods near enough to the house to see pretty much all that was going on there. While they were hiding there they saw a dozen patriots ride up to the house, and heard their leader ask if they had seen any redcoats about during the day.

"No," replied Farmer Dilworth, "I haven't seen any, though I heard some of the negroes say that they had seen some running toward the river."

The soldiers rode away, going toward the river; but Oscar Dane and his spies remained concealed near the house, to watch the old Tory and his four Hessians.

During the evening three Tory farmers came in, and Dilworth told them of the presence of the Hessians in the house.

They at once proceeded to form a plan to help them get back to the ship.

The young captain got up near enough to the house to get under a window and hear the plan as they unfolded it. They were to be covered with hay, and in a wagon driven by one of the farmers, who was to pretend that he had hay for sale. They proceeded at once to carry it out.

The negro man who usually had charge of the horses and wagon was called up and told to hitch them up at once.

He did so, wondering what his old master was up to. The wagon was half filled with hay, when the four Hessians were made to lie on top of it. Then as much more hay was thrown on top of them.

Thus they formed the center of a big load of hay which came from the barn of Dilworth, the old Tory. Farmer Cop-

ley was to drive them down to within sight of the ship, when the Hessians were to leave the hay and make their way to safety under the British flag.

The wagon started, and so did the young patriot spies. When the wagon was going smoothly along the road the young captain rode up behind the hay and flashed some powder in the pan of his rifle so close to it as to set it on fire.

The hay was so dry and inflammable that the whole load was in a blaze in less than ten seconds.

The Tory farmer barely had time to leap from the wagon and yell. The horses became frightened and dashed down the road at full speed.

The yells of the Tory farmer made them run the faster. The faster they ran the more it fanned the flames. The pursuing horses of the young spies added to the terror of the two horses with the wagon.

"Catch Copley," ordered the young captain, "and bring him along."

Two of the young spies caught him and told him he was a prisoner.

He was almost speechless with terror, for they wore masks over their faces so that he could not recognize one of them.

In a little while the half-smothered Hessians began kicking off the burning hay as the wagon flew along the road. Two of them rolled out into the middle of the road with singed hair, eyebrows and burning uniforms. Fifty yards further on another tumbled out—and the fourth one rolled out soon after in such a way as to break his neck.

They let the horses run without hindrance, and half a mile farther on they dashed against a tree and broke loose from the burning wagon.

The three Hessians were taken prisoners along with Farmer Copley.

Only one of the redcoats could speak English, and he was so badly frightened that he could do nothing but splutter and say "Mine Gott in Himmel!"

"What does this mean, Mr. Copley?" demanded Captain Dane of the Tory farmer, when they had the prisoners together.

"I don't know, myself," was the reply. "I didn't know they were in the hay. Mr. Dilworth said as how his nigger was sick, and asked me to drive his wagon for him down to Sid Smith's place for him."

"You didn't know those redcoats were in the hay?"

"No, I did not."

"Will you swear to that?"

"Yes, and on all the Bibles in Virginia, if you want me to."

"Well, I don't want you to swear on anything. I heard you, with my own ears, arrange with Dilworth how to get those four redcoats back to their ship. I was right under the window at the time."

Copley looked up at the masked figure on the iron-gray horse with a look of terror in his face, and exclaimed:

"My God! Who are you?"

"I am the captain of a secret band of patriots. The Tories of Virginia will have trouble enough from this time on till the king calls his troopers home. You have been caught aiding the enemies of your country. You can go on to the ship yourself; the redcoats will be sent on to Richmond."

"Captain, I—I—let me go home and I'll take the oath of allegiance to the Continental Congress," stammered the Tory farmer, trembling from head to foot.

"I wouldn't take the oath if I were you," said the young captain. "You'll be sure to do something that will force us to take you out and hang you some fine evening."

"No, I'll be a good Whig all the days of my life," he said.

"Very well. Take the oath; but woe unto you if you break it."

He took the oath and went home a much wiser if not more patriotic man.

When the young spies returned to their headquarters in Dismal Hollow they found Stevens and the others there with John Griswold, a prisoner.

They were horrified at the story of his treachery, as has been told in the opening chapter. As the reader knows, he was tried, convicted, condemned, and executed.

But the reverberation of the report of the rifles which sent him to death was followed by a wild, despairing wail outside the entrance to the cave which caused every cheek but one to blanch.

CHAPTER IV.

THE YOUNG CAPTAIN OF THE BAND.

After the first glance at each other's faces the band moved toward the entrance as with one impulse. One of them removed the small stone which served as a lock on the inside, and pushed the great boulder around on its pivot. The young captain marched out, followed by the others.

Outside he stopped and looked around and up, as if trying to catch sight of the owner of that voice they had heard. But a profound silence reigned all about them.

Suddenly a cry rang out, clear and distinct, on the calm night air:

"You have killed him, but vengeance will come!"

Every man of the band started.

Some of them turned pale as death, and gazed at each other as if conscious that the voice was a supernatural one.

Al Stevens, who was the first lieutenant of the band, turned to the young captain and said:

"I can't understand it, captain."

"Nor I—nor I," added several others.

"That's wasn't the voice of a live human being," said Marlowe, one of Oscar Dane's most intimate friends.

"I understand it well enough," said the captain. "Back into the cave!" and he turned and led the way followed by the entire band.

"Close the door, Stevens!"

Stevens closed the door and placed the stone back in its place.

"Strike the lights again."

The order was promptly obeyed, and once more the cavern was lighted up by torch and candle.

"Take your seats."

Every member of the band sat down around the long table, with the young captain at the head of it.

"Comrades," said Captain Dane, as he laid his rifle on the table in front of him, "we are not negroes to be frightened by a cry in the night, which we cannot, or, rather, do not understand. I am going to tell you what I think of the voice we have just heard outside, and then I am going to ask a question which I want to have answered. That voice came from the top of the hill—the roof under which we now sit. Every one of you looked up when you heard it, but the foliage of the trees prevented us from seeing anybody up there. Now, we did not wreak our vengeance on the traitor any too soon. That voice was a woman's. The traitor had told her of our hiding place in Dismal Hollow. They were no doubt lovers, and she, hearing of his arrest, no doubt came there to be near him in his peril and her anxiety. When she heard the report of the rifles which ended his treacherous life, she wailed out her grief. She may have been at the door listening, or she may not. Now, does anyone here know of a girl or young woman to whom John Griswold was paying attention? If any comrade knows let him speak, that we may look in the right direction for this new danger to our safety."

A mask in the center on the right of the table arose. He was tall and sinewy-looking, and every mask was turned toward him as he looked in the direction of the captain.

Said the tall spy:

"John Griswold was in love with Mary Granby, the niece of Silas Holmes."

"Do you know that to be true?" the captain asked.

"Yes, from what I have seen and heard."

"What have you seen, and what have you heard, comrade?"

"I have seen him kiss her good-by on more than one occasion, and once I heard him say that she would be his wife some day."

"That is enough. Now, does anyone here know whether Mary Granby is a Tory or not?"

The tall spy sat down, and a profound silence followed.

"Can no one," asked the captain, "answer that question? Is she Whig or Tory?"

"Silas Holmes is a true-blue patriot," said a spy on the left of the table.

"Yes," said another. "He is a Whig, tried and true."

"We all know that her uncle is all right," said the captain. "But as for the niece, we seem to be in the dark. Is her father a Whig or Tory?"

No one knew.

"Her father lives in North Carolina," said the tall spy, "and her mother, the sister of Silas Holmes, is dead. I heard

Griswold say as much one day. We were friends, you well know, and sometimes scouted together."

"Was he ever with her when he should have been on duty?" the captain asked.

"Never to my knowledge," was the reply.

A silence followed, during which the masks around the table were turned toward the young captain. That individual seemed lost in reverie for a time.

But he finally spoke up, and said to his lieutenant on his right:

"See that he is buried back there, where there seems to be plenty of earth. Detail five men for that purpose."

Al Stevens arose from his place at the table, and proceeded to detail a burial squad.

There were axes and spades in the cave, and in a half hour the last duty to the dead had been performed, and traces of the grave removed so far as was possible to do so.

"Now we may draw lots as to who may go home for the night," said the captain. "Those who have received orders will go at once to their posts."

Eight spies rose from the table and proceeded to where their horses were hitched in the rear of the cave. They led them forward while another opened the door to let them pass out.

When they were gone the great stone swung back into place again, and the twelve that were left proceeded to draw lots to see who should have the privilege of riding to their homes for the night.

Only five were to remain at the cave as a guard, and a nucleus for any sudden rally that might be called for.

The lots were drawn by means of sticks, long and short ones, which were kept on hand for that purpose.

Among those who drew a long stick was the young captain himself. He prepared at once to leave for his home, which was some five or six miles away.

Seven rode away, leaving five on duty within the cave.

Under the gleaming stars they made their way out of Dismal Hollow and entered the road that led to the main river road.

Out in the main road they separated, five going up the river and two down. Oscar Dane and Joe Morley went together.

"Joe, I am going over to Silas Holmes' place to-morrow," said the young captain to his comrade. "I want to find out if Mary Granby was away from the house to-night."

"Yes, and if she were it will prove that you were right in what you said about the voice we heard."

"But if she did not leave the house that voice was still human."

Joe was silent.

He was inclined to be a bit superstitious.

So are nine-tenths of mankind. Thousands there are who will not admit it, and only some sudden emergency develops the fact.

"You do not believe it, eh?" said Oscar, half jocularly.

"I have all my life heard that there are such things as ghosts," said Joe.

"Yes, so have I," remarked the captain. "But I have found out that it is all in the imagination. When a man is dead that ends his career on earth. A dead man can no more come back to earth than can a dead horse. Just go upon that theory and you'll find all the universe in harmony with it. The dead live with the dead. The living never see or hear them again, save in a disordered imagination."

"That appears to be reasonable," remarked Joe.

"You will find it plain common sense all the time, Joe," said the young captain. "Anything that common sense does not understand is apt to be mere ideas without substance."

When they reached the Dane plantation Joe bade the young captain good-night and rode on to his own home, a mile farther down the road.

Early the next day Oscar Dane mounted his iron-gray and rode off up the river road. He met two of the band on the way, and told them where he was going.

"Shall I go with you?" one of them asked.

"No. I shall not be gone long. If I am wanted at the Hollow before I return you may know where to send a messenger for me."

"Yes."

He rode on, and a mile further up the road he turned into another that led to Silas Holmes' plantation over on the creek.

Silas Holmes was known as one of the stanchest patriots on the south side of the James. He had but two children,

both boys, stalwart young patriots, who were with Washington, fighting for the liberties of America.

The old couple missed their two boys so much that they sent down into North Carolina for Mary Granby, the daughter of Silas Holmes' dead sister, asking her to come and make her home with them.

Her father gave his consent, and in due course of time she arrived, and was received with open arms.

She was a girl of twenty years of age, well-built and strong, with a streak of romance running through her mental make-up. Her eyes and hair were jet black, teeth even and white as ivory, a very decided beauty in many respects.

Oscar Dane had seen her a number of times, but had never made her acquaintance.

When he rode up to the house old Silas Holmes was sitting in the old armchair, which was never removed from the piazza, smoking a corn-cob pipe.

"Hello, Oscar Dane!" the old man cried, on seeing the son of his old neighbor. "Get down and come right in. Glad to see you. What has brought you up here? Nothing wrong, I hope?"

"No, sir, nothing wrong, unless it be that the news we are always hearing is wrong," returned Oscar, as he dismounted and ran up on the piazza to shake hands with the old patriot.

"Well, what's the latest news now?" the old man asked.

"The news is that the enemy is coming up to pay us a visit—that is, those of us whose names have been written down and sent to them by our Tory neighbors."

"But are not our soldiers coming to meet them?" the old patriot asked.

"I hope so. Word has been sent to them that the enemy is on the move in this direction, and we have some hopes of assistance from them."

"They must come," said the old man. "They must not leave us at the mercy of the enemy. Ah, how I wish I was twenty years younger!"

Just then the young niece of the old patriot came out on the piazza to bring him some more tobacco for his pipe.

The old man introduced them, and proceeded to reload his pipe. Oscar Dane saw that the girl's face was white as a sheet as she met him. But her black eyes snapped and flashed as she acknowledged the introduction by a curtsy, which was the style in good society in those days.

She did not utter a word, but re-entered the house when her uncle had helped himself to the tobacco she had brought.

CHAPTER V.

A TRAITOR'S SWEETHEART.

When Mary Granby went into the house and left her uncle with his guest the latter turned and asked him:

"When did you hear from James and Will, Mr. Holmes?"

"I received a long letter from Jimmy two weeks ago," said the old man, "and he told me all about how he captured that British flag in the last fight they had with the enemy. He had to kill two redcoats ere he caught it, and then got away without a scratch," and the old patriot's face flushed with pride as he related the exploit of his boy.

"Jimmy is a good soldier and true blue," remarked Oscar.

"Yes, he is; you may well say that," assented the old man.

"How I would like to be in a company of which he was captain!" said Oscar. "Lord, what a dashing officer he would make!"

"Yes, indeed," said the old man, blowing wreaths of smoke above his head. "Maybe he will be a general before the war ends."

"I wonder when it will end?" Oscar said. "I see no prospect of its ending soon."

"It will not end till the accursed redcoats leave America forever," said the old man. "Washington will drive them out in the end, but it will be a long time yet, and after thousands of good men have laid down their lives. My niece does not believe that we can beat the king's troops. She says that England is a great and powerful nation, while we are a mere handful in comparison with her. That may be but I tell her that England can't send over men enough to hold such a vast country as this; hence, if we hold out it is only a question of time about our winning our independence. But she won't believe it."

"Is she a Tory?"

"Bless you no! She is only a nervous woman, that's all.

She does not like the idea of men going to war and killing each other about a question of government."

Oscar was going to ask another question, but at the moment he caught sight of the skirts of Mary Granby's dress in the room on the right of the door. He happened to be looking through the window at the time.

Instantly the thought flashed through his mind that she was listening. He was quick to decide, and not another question would he ask.

He remembered her pale face and the flash of her black eyes when she was introduced to him. He was not so devoid of understanding as not to know that a spirit of hate was at the bottom of it.

After a few moments more of conversation with the old man, he said that he was on his way over to Seabury's, another patriot family two miles farther on.

"I must be going," he added, "as I wish to get back home before dark."

"Come back in time to take dinner with us," said the old man, knocking the dead ashes out of his pipe.

"Thanks, but that's impossible," he replied.

"Well, remember me to your father and mother. I haven't seen them since last June."

"Thanks. I shall tell them."

Oscar shook hands with him and rode away.

"It was she," he muttered, as he rode up the road. "She knows of the cave in the Hollow. John told her everything, and she is now meditating revenge. As sure as the enemy gets here she'll lead them there, and have them destroy us in it. I am going to put a watch on her. My heavens! It's awful to have to make war on a single young woman, but what are we to do? There's no other retreat so safe as Dismal Hollow in all Virginia."

By taking another small crossroad the young captain made his way back to the river. Then he rode fast till he reached home.

One of the spies came thundering along on his horse, which was reeking with foam. He called to him, but he did not hear.

Knowing that something was wrong, Oscar sprang upon his iron-gray again, and dashed away in pursuit of him.

After riding a mile or so he overtook him.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Oh, is it you, captain?" returned the spy.

"Yes. Why do you ride so fast?"

"The enemy has landed from his vessels below Murchison's Bend, and is marching up the river road, killing people and burning their houses as they go."

"You have seen them?"

"Yes."

"How many did you see?"

"Over two thousand."

"Did you count them? But I know something about crowds. Hurry on up to the camp of Colonel Hampton and tell him about it. Unless ordered by General Morgan to go elsewhere, report at Dismal Hollow without delay. I am going there now," and, without going home for his supper, the young captain hastened on to Dismal Hollow, reaching there about sunset.

He found the five spies there who had been left in charge, and told them the news.

"Hurry now and call the others in at once!" he ordered, and the five hastened away, leaving him there alone in the cave where the body of John Griswold lay buried.

"With only a solitary candle burning in the huge dark cavern, he lay down on his blanket to rest, and await the arrival of the rest of the band."

Three hours later two of them arrived. One came from below with the news of the enemy's approach, and was astonished to hear that the captain was already in possession of it.

By midnight twelve of the band were in the cave ready to go wherever ordered.

Eight were out on duty, and would not return till said duty had been performed.

Leaving a note for any of them that might come in, telling where the band was going, the young captain led the way out of the cave and threaded his way out of Dismal Hollow to the main road.

"Now for hot work," he said, to his small band. "Follow me and let's see if we can do anything."

They rode like the wind, and ere daylight came within sight of the campfires of the redcoats, which could be seen two miles away from the top of a hill.

"There they are," said Oscar, as he reined up his horse and glared at the many lights in the distance.

The twelve spies gazed silently at the campfires of the enemies of their country, and some of them mentally calculated the number of lives that would be snuffed out ere they were driven back.

"I am going into that camp," said Oscar Dane, turning to Al Stevens, who was by his side. "I am going to try to find out how many are there, and all about them. You had better hang around, and pick up all the information you can. I don't know where I will come out. I'll sound the call when I do get through."

He dismounted, and proceeded to make up a disguise such as every member of the band carried with him for any sudden emergency.

One of the spies took charge of his horse, and another his rifle.

Then without a word more, he glided away in the darkness, and hurried toward the camp.

Al Stevens ordered the spy in charge of the iron gray to take him to a swamp near by and conceal him where he would not be likely to be seen by any of the enemy.

Then the spies scattered all about the woods to gather such information as they could pick up.

It was but an hour or so till dawn; but during that time they found several loyalists making their way into the camp.

They were spotted and their names whispered to each spy that they might not be forgotten.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FAIR TORY.

Young Oscar Dane, as he neared the lines, crept into a dense thicket to wait and watch for a chance to get over. He had been in patriot camps several times, and knew pretty well how they were managed. As for personal safety, he was not afraid of being recognized by any Tories, as his disguise was one no one could penetrate.

A sentinel was passing to and fro on his beat within a few feet of where the young spy was concealed. He was a stalwart young redcoat, probably about twenty-five years of age.

Dane could see his face in the gray dawn as he passed his thicket, and mentally calculated the chances of a trial of strength with him.

At last he made up his mind to make a spring upon him as he came by again, and drawing his knife, he made ready.

The young Briton, unconscious of any danger whatever, came slowly by, looking in the opposite direction from the spy.

Just as he passed the thicket Oscar sprang out and drew his knife across his throat with such force as to almost sever his head from his shoulders.

The redcoat dropped his musket and staggered forward a few paces, falling to the ground and dying without a groan.

Oscar did not wait to see whether or not his work was well done, but darted into the bushes on the inside of the line which concealed him from view.

But he knew the dead sentinel would soon be found and a search made for the guilty one. So he made his way to a campfire, where he saw fully half a hundred Tories huddled together. Quite a number of familiar faces were turned toward him as he approached the fire.

But no one seemed to know him, nor did he pretend to know anybody there.

"I'm goin' to jine 'em," said one of the Tories.

"So'm I," said another.

"If they stay hyer I will, too," said a third. "But if they don't then I can't."

"Waal," said another, "if you jine 'em you'll have to stay with them—so what's the difference?"

"Yes, that's so. Waal, I'll see. I want 'em to come up my way, though, an' give the rebels a lesson that will make 'em behave themselves."

"They'll do that, I reckon."

"That's what they have come for. The king's men ought to have some protection."

"Yes," said Dilworth, the old Tory, whose wagon and load of hay had been destroyed by the Twenty Spies. "There's a band of young rebels up my way whose insolence is almost intolerable. If they are not dealt with in some severe way they will give us any amount of trouble."

"That's the case up my way, too," said another, a near neighbor to old Silas Holmes. "Some of the members of that band live over my way, too, and if the king's troops would only come over there and give them a little scare I think they would behave themselves over after. I had to bring all my family away because they threatened to hang me and burn my house down."

"Is it so bad as that over there?" another asked.

"Yes, and all because a Whig was found dead in his yard one night, shot by somebody, the Lord only knows who."

"It may have been done by a personal enemy," suggested another.

"Yes, but we kingsmen have to bear all the blame for everything."

Young Dane listened to all that talk, and joined in with them for appearance sake. They soon looked upon him as one of the most vengeful kingsmen in the camp.

The officer in command of the force did not waste any time on the refugees except to glean all the information he could. He was compelled to be on the move all the time to prevent the patriots from concentrating on him at any one point.

The refugees were very much disappointed when they found that the troops were to march away from that point, going further up the river road toward Richmond. They were so simple as to think the soldiers had come there to remain for their protection.

Some of them hastened back to their homes lest in marching with the redcoats their Whig neighbors should spot them for future vengeance.

But young Dane, well disguised, decided to go with them and see what information he could pick up that would be of use to the patriots.

The column had marched about ten miles when a woman was seen riding at full speed toward them. She was mounted on a splendid steed and rode like a queen. She was a beautiful woman, and something about her caused young Oscar Dane to think he had seen her before.

The colonel at the head of the column met her, bowing as if he thought her a princess.

"Are you the officer in command of these troops?" he asked.

"I am, lady," he replied.

"Then send a company, and I will guide them to the hiding place of a band of young rebel cut-throats. They can all be captured on the spot."

"How many are there?" the officer asked.

"Only twenty, and they are all boys from eighteen to twenty years of age."

"How far is their hiding place from here, miss?"

"About ten miles from here, but only four miles from where you will pass if you keep in this road two hours or so."

"What is the name of the place?"

"It is called Dismal Hollow—a swamp and a cave. A young villain by the name of Dane is the captain of the band. You will go right by his father's as you march up this road."

Oscar Dane heard every word she uttered, and knew that she was no other person than Mary Granby, the niece of Silas Holmes, though she had made up in a way to utterly deceive him as to her features.

He knew enough to know that she could lead them up to the hill over the cave, if not to the mouth of the cave itself. He pretended not to be listening, but kept near enough to catch more she said.

"I shall not be able to send out any small detachments of troops," said the colonel to her. "It is very dangerous to do so, as the enemy could destroy them in detail, being more familiar than we are with the country. There are enough of your neighbors with us now to do the work you suggest, miss. I'll tell them about it when we go into camp to-night, if you will lead them to the spot."

She did not say anything at the time, but young Dane could see a look of keen disappointment in her face. It was then that a sudden inspiration came to him.

Stepping boldly up to the officer's side, he saluted him and said:

"Pardon me, colonel, but I overheard what the lady was saying to you about those young rebels, and if she will undertake to pilot the way for us, I'll get enough kingsmen together to break up that nest of traitors this very night."

"Ah! What do you say to that, miss?" the colonel said, turning to the young woman. "He speaks like a man of courage. What say you? Will you accept the offer?"

"That I will," she said, looking hard at the young spy.

"Then tell me where you will meet us," said Dane, "and I'll come there with a band that can thrash double their number in rebels."

"I will meet you at the crossroad which runs to Dismal Hollow at ten o'clock," she replied.

"Very well. I'll be there. I'll go after my friends at once," and he turned off into the woods and disappeared from sight.

A few signals soon brought the other spies to his side. To them he told the story of Mary Granby's effort to bring a troop of redcoats to Dismal Hollow, and the arrangement he had made with her to capture the entire band.

When the appointed time came the band was promptly on hand to the number of sixteen. Mary rode up undaunted, and declared herself ready to lead them to the spot.

"There are hardly enough of you," she said. "There are twenty in the band, and you have but sixteen."

"But we are to ambush them," said Dane. "When we shoot down sixteen of them we can easily take care of the other four."

"Yes, that's so. Come on. I can lead you to the cave, or rather the hill in which the cave is, and you can then find it yourselves."

"You have never been in the cave?"

"No, but I have had a description of it, and have been on the hill just above the entrance to it."

"Well, lead us there, and we'll do the rest. But can't you lead us up the path through the swamp to the mouth of the cave?"

"No. I can lead you only where I have been myself."

She led the way to the top of the hill which overlooked the swamp in front of the entrance to the cave.

Stopping there, she said, pointing down toward the tree-tops under the hill:

"The cave is under us. The entrance to it is just below there. If you can get down there you can capture them as they go in or come out."

"But how can we get down there?" Oscar Dane asked.

"I don't know. You are here, there is the cave. You must do the rest, and heaven knows I hope you will not let one of the wretches escape."

"Will you go down with us?" Dane asked, dismounting, as did all the other spies.

"I will wait here for you," she replied.

"Miss Granby," said Dane, clutching the bit of her horse. "I am Oscar Dane, and we are the band you seek to destroy."

Quick as a flash she drew a pistol from a pocket of her dress and fired point-blank at his face. The young captain staggered backward and fell to the ground, while the intrepid girl dashed away on her horse like a whirlwind!

CHAPTER VII.

STRATEGY OF THE SPIES.

So sudden was the shot, and so entirely unexpected, that not one of the band suspected what had really happened till one of them exclaimed:

"Run her down! She has shot the captain!"

Then a half dozen sprang into their saddles and dashed away in the direction she had gone.

In the starlight one could not see further than ten or fifteen paces, hence the fugitive was out of sight ere the pursuit began.

But they knew which way to go.

They knew that she would go in but one direction, and in that direction they rushed with all the speed their horses could command.

Al Stevens and ten others remained behind and attended to their young leader. They lifted him to his feet and asked:

"Are you hurt, captain?"

"Where are you hit?"

Oscar Dane was dazed.

He rubbed his eyes and glared around like one uncertain where he was.

Suddenly he exclaimed:

"Where is she? Don't let her get away!"

"Marlowe and five of the band are pursuing her," said Stevens.

He rubbed his eyes again.

"The flash blinded me," he said, "and some of the powder got into my eyes. It was a narrow escape."

"It was indeed," said Al. "I didn't dream it was in her to do such a thing."

"Nor did I," admitted the young captain. "She is a dangerous woman, and if we don't catch her she will some day bring a company of redcoats or Tories down on us when we least expect it."

"Yes, I think so, too, but I am so glad you are not hurt that I am not worried about anything else. I thought you were killed when I saw you fall."

"Did you say Marlowe and five of the band had gone after her?" Oscar asked.

"Yes."

"Well, we may as well be going by the old route."

"Yes. Can you mount and ride?"

"Yes. Nothing but the powder touched me. I was merely blinded by the flash."

He mounted his horse and rode back to where the entrance to the swamp path began and then they turned to go to the cave to wait the return of Marlowe and his five riders.

They reached the cave in due time and passed inside, where they struck lights and lay down on their blankets to wait till the others came in.

"What shall we do with her if Marlowe catches her?" Al Stevens asked. "We can't dispose of her as we did John Griswold."

"Of course not," replied Oscar. "I was thinking of that myself. I hope the fright will be sufficient to drive her out of the country."

"Yes, if Marlowe does not catch her. But what if he does? We ought to decide on that before he brings her back."

Captain Dane rose to his feet and said:

"She must be told to go back home to North Carolina. She can't stay here in Virginia. She is a very dangerous foe."

"But if she won't go?"

"Then we will have to make a prison of this cave, with a jailer and a guard."

They talked for hours, and then one remarked:

"She must have given them a long chase."

"I hope she may get away, and never stop till she gets to North Carolina."

"She'll ride right straight into the British camp," said one of the band, "and tell that redcoat colonel everything that happened."

"That's so," said the young captain. "I never thought of that. She'll take refuge there. Well, I don't think he'll stop to send any of his soldiers to look after us unless he goes into camp somewhere about here, which I don't think is his intention at all."

It was near daylight when Marlowe and his five spies returned.

The girl was not with them.

"She rode like the wind," said Marlowe, "and made right for the British camp. Of course, we could not pursue her there. She dashed right into their lines without paying any attention to the sentry's challenge. We heard a shot. But as our horses' hoofs had been heard in the camp, we deemed it best to get away as soon as possible, and so we came away."

"You did right," said Oscar Dane. "You should not rush into a death-trap. Our work is of more importance to the cause, and it's one that somebody has got to do."

"But are we not in danger of being hemmed in here?" Al Stevens asked. "Suppose she should lead five hundred men here? What could we do?"

"They could never find the door of the cave," said one.

"I am not sure of that. Any Indian could trail us over the rocks down by the entrance there, and they would suspect us of being inside."

"The fact is," said Oscar Dane, "the enemy dare not divide his force to send out detachments just now. Our safety lies in that."

"But are you sure of that?" Al asked.

"Yes, quite sure of that. I am also sure that the enemy has not come to stay. He has come to do as much mischief as he can, and then get away again."

"Why do you think so?"

"Because he hasn't men enough to stay with. Had he come to stay he would have brought 10,000 instead of about 2,000."

Why, General Morgan has men enough to beat him now, and in two or three days more we may have a big battle."

"If they go away Mary Granby will go with them, I guess," said Al, who was very much worried over the fact that she had sought refuge in the British camp.

"Yes. I hardly think she will dare go back to her uncle's home after what has taken place."

"Then she will give her information to some of the Tories about here. We must never leave the Hollow without a lookout again."

"No—two men should be on guard all the time, day and night."

"Now for a few hours' sleep, boys," said the young captain, "and then we must away to follow the enemy and keep General Morgan posted about their movements."

They lay down on their blankets, and were soon soundly sleeping, for some of them were tired from hard riding.

It was near daylight when they were called up, and after a cold breakfast they mounted their horses and rode away, leaving two of their number to guard the Hollow and watch everyone found prowling about there.

They found the enemy still advancing toward the capital. By hard riding they got around in advance of them, and it was then that the secret band showed some fine work as scouts and spies.

Oscar went in person to report to General Morgan.

"Ah, I am glad to see you, my young friend," said the old soldier. "Come this way," and they stepped aside to talk in whispers.

"Have you any news for me?" the general asked.

"Yes, general. I have been in their camp and even talked with the officers. They are very much afraid of you."

"How know you that?"

"Because they had refused to send out any detachment at the earnest begging of the Tories, for fear of disaster."

"That is the part of wisdom. A wise man would act just that way."

"Then again, they believe you outnumber them, and keep themselves in readiness to retreat all the time."

"Ah! That's the best news yet! It's a sign of weakness always in an enemy! You are sure of what you say?"

"As sure as I am that I live, general," said Oscar.

"Very well, I'll trust you."

In less than half an hour the bold soldier ordered a forward movement, and the patriots, eager to meet the redcoat in battle, made the welkin ring with their shouts.

The young captain hastened back to join his spies and met Marlowe and five of them with a prisoner whom they had captured in a skirmish.

"The patriots are coming!" he said to Marlowe. "We'll have a battle to-morrow morning. General Morgan is coming with 5,000 men!"

"Good! We'll have the rest of them by to-morrow night, then."

"Yes, those that are alive."

Oscar took Marlowe aside and whispered to him:

"Manage to let your prisoner escape and get back to his comrades. He'll tell what he heard us say, and that will be worth a thousand men to us."

"Yes, that's so," and the young lieutenant hastened back to his comrades, and said:

"We must take the prisoner to the rear—here, I'll take him, purposely missing him."

In a little while the escaped redcoat was inside his own lines telling his commander what he had heard the rebel scouts and pickets say. At the same time some of their own spies returned and made reports confirming his words.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TRAITOR'S BROTHER.

The effect of Oscar Dane's ruse was soon manifest.

The enemy halted and threw out a picket line, and prepared to make a stand at that point.

That was a clear point gained.

But by and by a sudden movement was seen while the patriot force was yet miles away.

They began a hurried retreat.

"Whew!" exclaimed the young captain. "They are going back!"

"Yes, so they are. He's coming some of our cavalry!"

A squadron of patriot cavalry came up at a round trot. Oscar Dane hastened to speak to the officer, and tell him what he had done and why the enemy retreated so precipitately.

"Who are you?" the major in command of the squadron asked.

"I am Oscar Dane, of the Secret Band of Dismal Hollow—twenty patriot spies who have given General Morgan all the information he has about the enemy."

"Oh, you are, eh?" and the major sneered. He had not heard of the Twenty Spies, and took no stock in what the young leader of the band told him. "Well, I'll show you what they are running away from," and he rose in his stirrups and called out to his men to prepare to charge.

"Major!" called out Oscar, loud enough for his whole squadron to hear. "They have a strong rear guard. Don't charge! You are going into the jaws of death!"

The impetuous officer dashed away at the head of 150 men, and five minutes later they were engaged in a terrific combat with the rear guard of the enemy.

"Heaven help the poor fellows!" exclaimed the young captain as he heard the heavy musketry firing, which he knew came from the redcoats.

Ten minutes later the squadron—what was left of it—came flying back in fragments, and a body of troopers came thundering after them, slashing right and left with their sabers.

"We are fourteen here, boys!" cried Oscar Dane, "all good marksmen. Drop fourteen of those redcoats and they'll stop."

Quick as a flash the young spies leveled their rifles at the enemy, coolly aimed and fired.

Twelve troopers tumbled from their saddles.

They staggered back under the fire, and the spies proceeded to reload their pieces.

Ere they were ready for another fire the troopers retreated, evidently fearing a trap of some kind.

The demoralized cavalymen retreated some distance back ere they were reformed.

They had suffered severely and their commander was in a towering rage with himself for what he had done.

It was a couple of hours or so ere he saw Oscar Dane again, and then he had the manliness to say:

"You were right; their rearguard is a strong one. But the only way to find out the strength of the enemy is to feel him."

"I found out by seeing him," said Oscar. "If I see a red-hot thing I am going to depend on my eyes and not attempt to feel of it."

The major glared at him in astonishment. He was a brave soldier, who had been twice wounded, and yet here was a youth teaching him a lesson in the art of war.

"I want to thank you and your band for that volley," he said, after a pause. "It checked them."

"Thanks, sir. I am glad we were on hand in time."

The enemy retreated down the river road, burning down the residences of several patriots on the way. They set fire to the home of the Danes, but the negroes managed to extinguish the fire ere much damage was done. They did not have time to do it over again, and so the house was saved.

Night came on, and the redcoats kept up their retreat till long after midnight, by which time they had reached the protection of the guns of their ships in the river below Murchison's Bend.

By daylight Morgan's main force came up, and made such a show of strength that the redcoats really believed that he had at least 5,000 or 6,000 men with him.

They dared not attempt to move again in the face of such a force, which they knew would increase in numbers every hour in the day.

During the next night they embarked on board the vessels in the river, and when morning came they were gone.

But where was Mary Granby?

On rushing into the camp, hotly pursued by the young spies, she was fired at by the guard, who was unable to distinguish her from a man in the dark.

The bullet missed her, but brought down her horse. She uttered a cry as she rolled out of the saddle when the horse fell, and her voice told that the furious rider was a woman. The corporal of the guard came running to the spot, to whom she told her story.

She was taken before the colonel commanding the force. He recognized her at once, and asked:

"Well, did you break up that nest of young rebels?"

"Oh, sir, that young man who volunteered to go with me was the captain of the band!"

"Eh! What!" gasped the astonished officer.

"He was the captain of the band," she repeated, "and when he met me at the place agreed on he had sixteen of his men with him!"

"Well!"

"I led them up to the hill above the cave, and told them where they could find the entrance to it. He then seized my horse's bit and told me that he was Oscar Dane, the captain of the band. I was so desperate that I drew a pistol from my dress pocket, shot him in the face and dashed away."

"Brave girl!" exclaimed the officer, grasping her hand. "I hope you killed him!"

"I don't know that I did. He fell, I know, and then I dashed away. They pursued me right up to your lines, and there your guard shot my horse dead. I am on foot now."

"You shall not be so long, my dear young lady," said the colonel. "You shall have the best horse that can be found in my command."

"Thanks, ever so much," she replied. "I am so tired that I can hardly stand up."

"You shall have a tent and blankets," and they were given to her forthwith.

She slept till morning, and when the camp was astir again all the officers had heard of her daring escape from the rebels. They crowded around to congratulate her and make her acquaintance.

But events hurried things, and a little after sunrise the command was on the move again.

The ruse adopted by the young captain of the patriot spies had the effect to stop the march, and a few hours later the retreat commenced.

Then came the charge during the afternoon, on the rear guard by the patriot cavalry under Major Douglass.

The orderly sergeant of the cavalry was Tom Griswold, a brother of John, whom the spies had shot as a traitor. His horse was shot down and himself captured by the rearguard, together with four others, who were promptly hurried forward.

The retreat was kept up all the afternoon, and the few prisoners captured were kept under a very strong guard.

Just before sunset Mary Granby discovered Tom Griswold among the prisoners, and exclaimed:

"Why, Tom is it you?"

"Yes, Miss Mary," he replied. "I was captured to-day by the rearguard. Have they captured you, too?"

"No, Tom. I am a loyalist now."

"Eh! What? You a Tory?"

"Yes, and you will be, too, when I tell you why I am one." He was doubtful, but yet seemed eager to hear her story.

"What has happened?" he asked.

"John has been murdered," she half-whispered to him.

He paled and staggered as if stricken a hard blow.

"And by the Whigs," she added. "I am here for revenge, and I am going to have it."

CHAPTER IX.

SEEKING VENGEANCE.

Young Tom Griswold had been a good patriot and soldier. He had fought in several battles, and was slightly wounded.

His brother John would have been a member of his company had not his mother begged so hard that her younger boy might be spared to her.

He loved John only as one brother could love another. At any time he would have been willing to lay down his life for him.

When he heard that he was engaged to Mary Granby he went to her, kissed her, and called her sister in such a loving way that he won her sisterly love at once.

Now, when she told him how John had been seduced into joining the secret band of young spies, and afterward tried and shot by them, his soul revolted at the idea of still fighting for the cause.

But he was not altogether unreasonable. He asked her:

"How came you to know so much about the band, Mary?"

He asked.

"John told me everything," she said. "He kept no secrets from me."

"Ah! He did wrong there, then."

"How so?"

"He had taken an oath not to reveal any of the secrets of the band under pain of death. Yet he betrayed them to you."

"But what harm was that? I was as ardent a patriot as any of them."

"That may be, but he betrayed the secrets all the same. Mary, you tempted poor John to do wrong. He loved you so well that he could refuse you nothing."

Mary glared at him.

She would not tell him that she and her father down in North Carolina, were bitter loyalists, and that she had hated the patriots ever since the Declaration of Independence.

"But should he be shot for telling a few secrets to his sweetheart?" she demanded. "I was the best friend he or they had. No, Tom, I am now the bitterest enemy of the Whigs that ever breathed, and if you have a spark of manhood in you you would vow vengeance against that band of young spies, and never rest till the last one of them is underground."

"What does your Uncle Silas say about it?" Tom asked.

"I have not seen Uncle Silas for two days. I don't think he knows anything about it, nor do any of your family. I have not had the heart to tell them. Uncle Silas does not even know where I am. I shall never go back home till I have avenged poor John, and then I'll go back to my old home a broken-hearted woman. Why, cannot you disguise yourself and help me, Tom?"

"I would like to, but I am a prisoner. The redcoats have got me, and they won't be apt to let me go."

"I'll see the colonel and get him to let you go," she said.

"I think he would do anything I ask him now, since he has found out how I have been treated."

"Well, see if you can get him to let me go, and I'll help you kill every member of that band."

Mary hastened to see the colonel and tell him her story about poor John Griswold. But he was too busy to hear her story then. He put her off till the retreat should end, and then he would hear it.

It was midnight ere the retreat ended, and then she sought him again, and soon told him the whole story.

He was deeply interested, and saw through it all one of the best agencies for the extermination of the secret band of young spies. To him it now appeared quite plain that to the young spies he owed the utter failure of his expedition.

"They had news of every step we took," he said to himself, "almost as soon as we made it. Those young vipers must have been the main source of it. They know every foot of the country and every inhabitant for miles around."

"Yes," he said to Mary, "you may manage it as you please. He shall be given a permit to leave. See to it that he does good service for the king. That band of young spies should be exterminated as soon as possible, for it's incredible the amount of mischief they can do."

"Oh, thank you ever so much!" she exclaimed. "You'll soon hear of them as being no more, for my hate is one that will never sleep as long as one of them is alive."

She hastened to acquaint Tom with what the colonel of the British force had said, and he was overjoyed at the prospect of escaping the horrors of the prison pens to which the patriots were assigned when captured.

That night they were allowed to escape together in disguise, and even in the midst of the patriot forces their identity was not suspected.

Tom saw Oscar Dane within an hour after he had passed the lines, and the young captain saw him and Mary, but they were so well disguised that he did not suspect who they were.

The enemy having disappeared in their ships, the patriot forces went into camp and sent out spies down the river to keep track of them. The general sent for the captain and said to him:

"You have done us a great service. I want you to do more. We don't know where the enemy will strike next, but when he does land we want the news at the quickest possible moment. An organized band like yours, with relays acting under orders, is worth a dozen individual spies. Go, then, and find the enemy."

"General, we shall do our best," said Oscar, saluting and leaving the general's tent.

Ten minutes later he had fourteen of his band around him.

He detailed one to remain behind to tell the others where they were going, and then moved off down the river road.

Tom Griswold and Mary Granby saw them depart, and she said to him in a whisper:

"They are going off in a body down the river. That will give us time to get men ready for them by the time they return to Dismal Hollow."

"Dismal Hollow is a good ways from here," said Tom. "How in the world are you going to get there?"

"Walk it if we can't get horses," she said.

"But can you walk so far?" he asked.

"I think I can. I'll have to if we can't get horses."

"If I had any arms I would soon have two good horses. But I am unarmed."

"Well, maybe we can get arms, too. Be patient. There are a good many horses in this camp."

"By noon it was discovered that the enemy had left quite a number of horses behind, and the refugees in the camp were allowed to take them.

By that means Tom got one for himself, and a very good one for Mary. It was a cavalry saddle, but she managed to seat herself in it, and they started off up the river road toward their old homes.

They reached home that night, and Tom told his parents of the fate of John, as told him by Mary Granby.

The shock was a terrible one to the old couple; but they gave Mary a place in their hearts and home. She was to keep up her disguise and assume another name for the time being. Tom was to do likewise.

Two days passed, and then Tom and Mary, both now armed once more, started to pay a visit to Dismal Hollow, to spy out the retreat of the secret band during their absence on duty.

"Well mounted, they were not long in reaching the Hollow. Both were disguised, and seemed to be a man and his wife going somewhere in the settlement.

But the two sentinels on the lookout soon saw them coming and lay in wait for them.

They rode to the top of the hill, and there halted.

"The cave is under this hill," she said, in low tones, "and the entrance to it is down there among those trees and stones. I heard the shots that ended poor John's——"

Two rifle-shots rang out from a thicket a little distance away on their right, and their horses fell dead, both shot through the head.

CHAPTER X.

THE YOUNG SPIES' FIRST BATTLE.

On leaving the patriot camp to go down the river road to keep the enemy in sight the young captain of the secret band cautioned the one he left behind to say nothing to anyone about his destination, save to such members as should come to him for the purpose of making connection.

"Above all things," he said in a whisper, "don't talk about the band to anyone not a member, unless it be the general in command of the camp."

The young spy promised to obey his instructions in both letter and spirit, and the young captain left him and rode away at the head of his comrades.

All the king's men along the river road below Murchison's Bend had heard of the landing of the king's troops, and that they were marching on Richmond, sweeping everything before them.

They did not attempt to conceal their joy, and the patriots were correspondingly depressed. By and by the news came that the redcoats had sent a detachment down the river to look after the rebels there. The people of either side didn't know that it was the whole British force retreating back to their ships.

Hearing that the king's troops were coming, the Tories gathered in small squads here and there to give them welcome, while the patriots hastened to conceal their valuables and prepare for the worst.

When the little band of patriot spies rode furiously down the road they took them for heralds of the good news that was coming, and quickly gathered around them.

"Long live the king! Down with the rebels!" shouted a dozen of them, as they assembled in the road to intercept the young spies.

"Down with the king!" yelled Oscar Dane. "Long live George Washington and the Continental Congress!"

Then every member of the band cried and shouted it, to the consternation of the Tories, who saw that they had made a mistake.

"Are you boys rebels?" an old Tory asked.

"No," answered Oscar. "We are patriots. Are all you old people traitors to your country?"

"No. We are loyal to our king," replied an old gray-haired man, angrily.

"King George lives 3,000 miles away, and never was in this country. Every country belongs to its own people. We have more right to rule this country than King George has, and we are going to do it."

"You are, eh?"

"Yes, we are."

"What are you running away from the king's troops for, then? Why don't you turn and fight them? You are a fine set of rulers, you are. You make better runners."

"My friend, we are running after the king's troops, not from them," replied the young captain.

The whole crowd of Tories laughed most immoderately.

One of the Tory farmers, more amused than any of the others, said:

"Oh, you are going to run around the world till you overtake 'em that way! I wish I could run so fast myself."

"Don't be so funny, you old traitor," said Lieutenant Stevens. "The whole British force embarked on board their ships last night and made their escape down the river. General Morgan is after them with his army."

The story was too big for them to grasp it. They glared at him, and one of them remarked:

"Young man, you're the biggest liar in Virginia."

Oscar Dane sprang from his horse and rushed up to the Tory, saying:

"You'll take that back or I'll give you a thrashing!"

The Tory saw that he was but a youth, though of good size for one of his age.

"Well, I won't take it back, or the thrashing, either, I reckon," he replied.

"We'll see," said Oscar, giving him a blow straight from the shoulder.

The Tory was a heavier man than Oscar, but the young patriot did not fear him.

In another moment they were at it hammer and tongs. Oscar gave and took some hard blows, but finally gave one that blinded his antagonist. The latter drew his knife and tried to cut the young spy.

"Put up that knife or I'll fire on you!" sung out Al Stevens from his saddle, holding his rifle in readiness.

"You put down that rifle, youngster," ordered an old Tory. "You might get hurt if you don't."

The Tory rushed at Oscar with a big knife. Oscar drew a pistol and shot him dead.

"That's murder!" yelled an old Tory. "Take him to the look-up! He has killed one of the king's men."

Four or five rushed upon the young patriot to seize him.

"Back! Back, or I'll order my men to fire!" cried Dane, backing toward his horse.

Crack! went a rifle from one of the band in the saddle, and the Tory fell in his tracks with a bullet in his brain.

The Tories were in a fever of rage.

"Kill 'em! They're a lot of young vipers from somewhere! Shoot 'em down as you would so many wolf cubs!" and a dozen of them drew pistols, while others had guns with them.

Three or four of them fired at the young patriots, and then the entire party rushed into a country store—called in those days a groggery—and took refuge there.

One of the boys was wounded—a flesh wound—and that enraged the band to such an extent that they resolved to besiege the house and compel a surrender.

"Get back out of range," ordered the young captain, "till we can arrange this thing."

The spies fell back to the shelter of some trees and dismounted.

"Now we can send bullets through the side of that house from behind those trees over that," said Oscar. "Three of you stay here to hold the horses, and the rest of you come with me."

They obeyed promptly, and in less than ten minutes' time they were sending bullets through the thin weather-boards of the west side of the store from behind a dozen huge oaks not forty rods away.

The storekeeper ran out and called to the young captain: "Here now, stop this! I am not a loyalist. Stop your shooting."

"Turn 'em out, then!" returned Oscar.

"I can't. They are too many for me."

"Then come out yourself for safety, and we'll soon rout 'em out. We're going to give 'em all the war they want."

The storekeeper begged hard, but the boys were mad, and were bound to have a little battle of their own.

"These men are not soldiers," the storekeeper said.

"Neither are we," said Oscar, "but they are traitors to the country, and as they began this thing they have got to come out and surrender, or we'll shoot the house to splinters!"

That made the Tories mad, and they made up their minds that as the king's troops were coming down the road they would hold out, and then have the young rebels captured and hung to the limbs of the very trees under which they had now taken shelter.

So the firing was kept up for an hour or more, when two men rode up from above.

"What is the trouble here?" one of the men asked of Stevens.

"There's a band of Tories in there who began a row with us," was the reply, "and we are just helping them keep it."

"You are not loyalists yourselves, then?" the man asked.

"Yes, we are—loyal to our country and the Continental Congress."

"Well, if you'll stop firing I think I can settle this thing, as I know the men in there. They are my neighbors. They don't know that the king's troops are again on board their ships and gone down the river."

"All right. Go in and tell them," Oscar Dane, who was willing that those within the store should have the news from a source they would believe.

The two men went into the store, and were greeted by their Tory neighbors and asked to help kill the young rebels.

"You had better keep very quiet," he said to them, "for you don't know how much trouble you are bringing on yourselves. The king's troops have retreated to their vessels, and passed down the river last night."

That announcement sent consternation into the ranks of the Tories.

"Are you sure?" one of them gasped. "I can't believe it."

"I saw them embark myself," was the reply. "We are left at the mercy of the rebels. You had better stop all this fuss and go home. If the rebels should come down this way it would go hard with us."

They asked him to go out and make peace with the boys, and he came out, saying to Oscar:

"They are willing to stop if you boys will let 'em alone."

"Oh, well, they must come out and cry 'Long live Washington and the Continental Congress,' or we'll stay here a whole week."

He went back and told the Tories what the terms were, and they were agreed to.

A few minutes later they came out and hurrahed for Washington and the Continental Congress right lustily.

"Now let me tell you Tories something," said the young captain when they were all out in front of the store. "You may as well make up your minds now as at any other time, that the people of this country are not going to have King George to reign over them. We are going to own it ourselves, and don't want any king 3,000 miles away to be making our laws for us and taxing us to death. You had better try to live in peace with your Whig neighbors, for the time will come when you wish you had."

CHAPTER XL

IN THE ENEMY'S CAMP.

Having won a victory and given the Tories some wholesome advice, the young captain rode away at the head of the band, quite satisfied with the work he had done.

The Tories all along below were all eager to hear news from up the river. But the young spies being strangers to most of them they would not believe them. In two places the Tories were so numerous that they undertook to interfere with the young patriots.

It did not take them long to find out that they had made a mistake. The young spies were quick to resent any interference, and a blow would bring on a fight in a moment that caused the loss of one or more lives.

At last night came on, and they hurried on down the river road to a point where the ships had touched on their way down to the fleet. The news of the failure of the expedition

thus got abroad, and the Tories sneaked back to their homes, while the patriots came out and made the welkin ring with their shouts of joy.

Finally, about midnight they stopped on the banks of the river in sight of two of the vessels.

"We may as well stay here now, and see what we can find out," said Oscar. "They may have some object in view in stopping here. Al, take five men with you, and go about three miles farther down, and see what you can find out."

Al selected his men, and moved off as directed, and Oscar and the others lay down on the grass to rest and sleep.

Two hours later one of Al's men came hurriedly up on foot, to say that a regiment of redcoats were encamped two miles below.

"Ah! Do they mean to ravage the country about here? Every man of you scatter—go all around that camp, and see what you can find out, and then come back here to report."

They glided away through the woods, leaving only two of their number behind to care for the horses.

No sooner were they gone than Oscar Dane began to make up his disguise. In ten minutes he was a man of forty instead of a youth of nineteen.

"Now I'll see what they are up to, and find out all about it," he said, starting off for the camp.

On arriving at the lines, he found that the sentinels were not very vigilant. They knew that no armed body of patriots were down in that part of the country.

By a little shrewd management he got over the line and went wandering about the camp.

There were other countrymen there besides himself. In fact, every Tory in ten miles of the camp was there. He prowled around for hours, and not a familiar face did he see among them. At last, along in the middle of the forenoon, he was surprised at seeing two of the Tories with whom he and his band had the trouble with up at the country grogery the day before.

Being disguised he had no fear of being recognized by the Tories. But he was anxious to know what had brought them down there so soon after the landing of the redcoats.

Going up to one of them he asked:

"What do you think, neighbor? Will the king's troops stay with us and give us a chance to punish the rebels as they deserve to be?"

"I don't really know neighbor," was the reply. "If they don't I can't see how we are going to stand it much longer. Why, only yesterday a band of boys came riding furiously down the road to Bennett's Corners, and began firing at a party of kingsmen who were there. In a few minutes two good men were killed and five wounded. Such goings on can't be tolerated any longer, and we have come down here to tell the king's officers so. If they don't give us any protection against that sort of thing we can't afford to hold out for the king much longer."

"Yes, that's so," assented the other. "Our lives, property, and homes are all at stake. We must have protection or all is lost, so far as we are concerned."

"Have you seen the colonel yet?" the young patriot asked.

"No; but we were told that we could see him in an hour from now."

"Well, I'd like to see him, too," remarked Oscar, "for we want some help over our way, too, and must have it."

At the interview which followed the colonel commanding the regiment of redcoats promised the kingsmen that they should have all the protection they wanted, saying:

"We are going to teach your rebel neighbors that treason to the king means death to them."

"Ah, if you would!" exclaimed one of the Tories, a very vindictive old partisan. "Hang them and confiscate their property! That is the only way to deal with rebels!"

"Yes, and that's the way we are going to deal with them," returned the colonel.

Walking about the camp an hour later, Oscar saw a chance to get through the lines to the woods beyond. Once in the woods he gave a signal that soon brought two of the band to his side.

"Ride like the wind," he whispered to one of them, "and tell the first patriot officer you see that the redcoats are here preparing to burn and hang right and left, and that unless assistance is sent at once much damage will be done."

The brave fellow to whom the order was given hastened at once to obey. Ten minutes later he was riding like a whirlwind along the river road to deliver the message to the nearest patriot camp.

Thirty miles of hard riding brought him up short against a party of mounted patriot scouts.

"Halt!" came in a hoarse voice.

He halted, and said:

"I am a scout. Take me to your commanding officer at once."

The lieutenant in command of the scouts sent him forward in charge of two men.

To his surprise he was taken before General Greene, who had been conducting the famous campaign against Cornwallis in the Carolinas.

He had never seen the famous general, and was quite astonished when told who he was.

"I have been sent by Captain Dane, of the Secret Band of Dismal Hollow," said the young spy, "to say that the enemy has landed again from his ships above Yorktown, and is preparing to devastate the country around about there."

"Who is Captain Dane, and the secret band you speak of?" the general asked.

"He commands a band of twenty spies," was the reply.

"Are they all as young as you are?" the general asked.

"There are only two in the band who are older than I am."

"That shows that the young men of our country are made of the right stuff," remarked the general. "Is there anyone here who knows you, young man?"

"Yes, sir. General Morgan and Colonel Haynes know all about the band and Captain Dane."

General Greene sent one of his aides for General Morgan. That old soldier came quickly, and told General Greene that any member of that secret band of Dismal Hollow was to be believed at all times.

"They are the best, bravest, and most reliable spies and scouts I have ever seen," he added. "And they do their work silently and effectively, too."

"I am glad to hear that," said the general. "I can rely upon what he says, then?"

"Indeed you can."

"Very well. Go back and tell our people that they shall have help right away. General Washington and our French allies are coming as fast as they can."

The young spy remounted his horse and rode away to rejoin his comrades thirty miles away.

On passing the home of Oscar Dane he stopped to tell the old man that Washington and the French allies were coming to Virginia.

"Yes," said the old patriot, "and I hear that Cornwallis is coming up from the South, too."

"Let him come," said the young patriot. "Washington, with his continentals and the French allies, can take care of him."

"I hope so. If he does not it will go hard with us all."

"Yes, but we'll whip 'em yet," said the young spy, riding away.

A few miles below there he met another one of the band coming at full speed. He gave the signal of the band and stopped him.

"What's the news?" he asked.

"The redcoats have begun burning, and Oscar Dane is captured and is to be hanged as a spy!"

CHAPTER XII.

CONDEMNED TO HANG AS A SPY.

After sending a messenger off to carry the news to General Morgan, Oscar Dane returned to the enemy's camp to remain there till he could gather more news that was worth while.

There being so many Tories in the camp, nearly all of whom were farmers, he had no fears whatever of being recognized, or even suspected of being a patriot.

Late in the afternoon he was with a company of Tories, listening to some very exaggerated stories of a secret band of rebel spies up in a place called Dismal Hollow, when the same old Tory who had crossed his path twice before spoke up and said:

"Yes, I have seen them. They are all under age, and as bad a lot of young cut-throats as this or any other country ever saw. They are the ones we met at Bennett's Corners yesterday. I'd be willing to lose half my fortune to see them hanged. I know that young villain they call their captain."

and if I ever see him again I'd shoot him down, and then let 'em shoot me to death a moment later. I'd be willing to die if I knew I had killed him."

"That's the way to talk," said the young spy, slapping him on the back. "If every man would show a spirit like that this rebellion wouldn't last a year longer."

"Bah! you fellers won't fight," said a redcoat private soldier, coming up at the moment. "Here's enough of you to make a half regiment now. Why don't you organize to defend your homes?"

"We have no uniforms nor ammunition," replied the Tory.

"Neither have the terrible rebels you are so much afraid of. If you had any luck you'd soon get rid of 'em."

"But they're too many for us—five to one," said the old Tory.

"Bah!" and the redcoat turned away, as if disgusted at the refugees who had fled to the camp.

"I'd like to kick that fellow," said the young spy, gazing after him.

"So would I," put in the old Tory, who was as mad as a hornet.

By and by the same soldier came back that way.

He had been drinking some old Virginia applejack, and was now in a very ugly mood.

"Get out of my way!" he said, giving him a blow between the eyes that laid him sprawling on his back. "Take that for your kick!"

The soldier rose to his feet and rushed upon him.

He was a much larger, heavier, and stronger man than Oscar, and in a few moments was crowding him back among the Tories, not one of whom offered to interfere.

"Won't some of you call an officer and have him arrested for insulting us?" Oscar asked, hoping someone would do so and thus relieve him from attracting too much attention toward himself.

But not one of them stirred.

They were too much afraid of the uniforms of the king's soldiers.

The soldier kept crowding him, and at last they clinched and went down together.

In the struggle that followed, the disguise Oscar wore came off, and a cry of amazement burst from the old Tory with whom he had talked so much since coming into the camp.

"Why, he is the captain of that band of young spies!" he cried.

"Eh! What!"

"A spy! A spy!"

They threw themselves on him, and in less than half a minute Oscar found himself a helpless prisoner.

They tore the rest of the disguise from him, and he stood in their midst revealed in his proper person.

"A spy! A spy!" cried others, and soon several hundred soldiers and Tories were gathered around to gaze at him.

An officer came and asked him:

"Are you a spy?"

"No," was the cool reply.

"What are you, then?"

"Take me before the commanding officer and I'll tell him," said Oscar, who wanted time to gather his wits about him.

He saw that he was now in a tight place, and that there was but little hope for him. The two Tories could swear his life away without any trouble and the disguise would of itself be enough to condemn him under any military rule.

They carried him before the commanding officer, and told the story of his capture. The two Tories told what they knew about him.

"That's enough!" said the colonel. "Keep him under a strong guard."

A court-martial was summoned to meet in the evening, after supper, to try him as a spy.

Oscar was kept under a strong guard, and every soldier and Tory in the camp came around to look at and taunt him.

"You will get what you deserve now, you young villain," said the old Tory, who had sworn to his identity before the colonel.

"I hope I will," he replied. "It's not everyone who does in this life."

The Tories were particularly jubilant over his capture, and made themselves very merry over the incident.

In the evening the court-martial met and the prisoner was brought before it.

The trial was very brief, and he was condemned as a spy.

"But look here," he said, "I want to know if I can have a hearing before a higher court than this?"

"On what ground?" the colonel asked.

"On the ground that I am not and never have been in the Continental army. I have never been mustered in the service, and am not a soldier."

That was a question, and the officers held a short consultation over it. But it was finally decided that he was spying for the benefit of the rebels, and so the verdict was given against him—that he should be hanged at sunrise on the outskirts of the camp.

Then he was sent back under guard to be kept till morning.

The young spy was now in utter despair, and did not know what to do. If the secret band only knew of his situation, something might be done to help him—though what could be done was what he could not see.

The hours of the night wore along, and hope had almost died out in his breast, when he heard the hoot of the owl, which seemed to come from a tree not fifty feet away from where he was held a prisoner.

He knew then that one of the faithful band was about, and he would have given anything he possessed to be able to say a few words to him.

He returned the signal, and the stalwart redcoat who was pacing about as guard looked around and asked:

"What are you mocking that owl for?"

"Just to fool the bird," was the reply.

"You'd better be trying to fool the hangman who will come after you at sunrise," suggested the guard.

"I would if I knew how. Can you tell me how?"

"Yes, of course I can."

"Do so, then."

"Get up and run away."

"Any other way? I am not a very good runner."

"Yes. Blow your brains out. They don't hang dead men."

"That's a pretty sure way, at least. Now, won't you lend me your musket, that I may do that little job and save the hangman the trouble of calling for me in the morning?"

"I would like to, but you know the rule. It would go hard with me were I to do so. Maybe your George Washington will be along before daylight and take you away from us."

"Well, I wish he would. But he is not on hand to-night. Can you suggest any other plan?"

The sentinel laughed, and told him to go to sleep and say his prayers, as the night was wearing away very fast.

Oscar did not hear the owl any more, and so gave himself up for lost. He could not see any way out of the scrape. There were at least six hundred British soldiers in the camp, and the patriots could not muster force enough to create any diversion that could benefit him.

"Oh, if I could only see someone to whom I could say a few words!" he said to himself. "I won't say anything to these Tories and redcoats to be repeated to my mother, or to Bessie Stevens. They would laugh at me, and then swing me off as if I were a dog. No, I won't send any message to anybody through an enemy. I know the band will wreak a terrible revenge for my death. I can trust them for that."

The faint streaks of coming day were seen in the east, and as the dawn advanced Oscar saw a company of redcoats mustering to look after his execution.

Half an hour later an officer came with a squad of soldiers, one of whom carried a coil of rope in his hand, and said:

"Bring the prisoner along!"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE STRANGE CAPTURE.

Let us now return to the home of the Twenty Boy Spies, and note the occurrences there after the young captain and the greater part of the band had gone down the river to look for the enemy.

It will be remembered that two of the band had been left behind to keep watch to see if anyone came about with the intent to find out the existence of the cave.

These two young patriots were Bob Ellis and Joe Scranton. They were both about eighteen years of age, but had had the experience of old veterans since they joined the

band. They were bronzed from long exposure to sun and wind, which had the effect to make them seem older than they were.

Of course, they knew that Mary Granby had some knowledge of the existence of the cave, and the character of the band which used it. There were no secrets in the band. What one knew all knew—that is, in all things pertaining to the service.

"She may come down on us with a whole company, Bob," said Joe, as they sat under a clump of bushes not far from the highest point above the cave.

"Yes, she may—no telling what a woman may do," returned Bob.

"But if she does, what shall we do?" said Joe.

"Keep out of their way and watch," said Bob. "No use in doing anything just for the fun of getting shot."

Bob Ellis was nothing if not practical.

The romance of war had worn off in his case, and now, though true as steel and hating redcoats and Tories with a deathless hate, he was cool and business-like in his conduct, weighing the chances of success or failure in almost every move he made.

"You are right, Bob," said Joe. "I don't care to catch a bullet any more than you do. Yet were I to see them succeed in getting into the cave I'd be strongly tempted to give her a bullet right through the head."

"There you're wrong, Joe," said Bob. "I never was in love with a girl in my life, but nothing could make me raise my hand against one unless it was to save my life, or some other better than she."

"But she is trying to get us all murdered, ain't she?"

"Yes, and would do that little business for us if she could, no doubt. Yet I am not going to shoot her unless it is to save my life or that of one of the band."

Joe was silent for a moment or two.

This was a phase in the character of Bob Ellis which he had never noticed before, and it gave him food for thought.

Bob was silent, too, and he had a far-away look in his eyes as he looked out over the hollow to the range of hills on the other side.

"I shall never forget my mother, Joe," he said, after a silence of five minutes or more. "She died when I was but six years old. But well do I remember that nothing on earth was so dear to me as that sweet, blue-eyed mother. I see her sweet face in my dreams every night, and I love her yet with all my heart and soul, though she has been dead now ten years—yes, twelve years! Lord! how time flies. Twelve years—Hello! There goes a man and woman on horseback along the road!"

"Yes," said Joe, rising to his feet and shading his eyes with his hand. "They are riding slowly, as if they had plenty of time."

"Yes. I reckon they are going on a visit over to Blue Creek. She looks like an old woman from here."

"Can't see her face, but she dresses like one," remarked Joe.

"By my soul! They have crossed the creek and turned their horses this way!" exclaimed Bob.

"Yes, so they have! What does it mean, Bob?"

"It means that they are looking for our hiding place, for people never come about Dismal Hollow without having some very good reasons for doing so."

"Maybe the woman is Mary Granby."

"Yes. I am thinking that myself."

"Well, what shall we do?"

"We must wait and find out what we can about what they are after."

"But if it is she, what shall we do? It won't do to let her get away. Suppose we shoot the man and her horse, and then lock her up in the cave till the band comes back?"

Bob looked at his comrade. The suggestion was an easy solution of the difficulty, yet it was one he did not like to adopt. Notwithstanding the fact that he had already seen five men bite the dust under his unerring aim, he did not like to shed human blood outside of a fair stand-up fight.

"No," he said. "Let's see what they are after, and then, if they are really after our secret, we can shoot down their horses, make 'em prisoners, and let the band decide their fate."

"Yes, I reckon that's the best plan," assented Joe.

Then, as the two rode steadily toward the crest of the hill, the two young spies crept further back into the thicket and awaited their coming.

As they approached the top of the hill they could see that

if the woman was really Mary Granby she was well disguised. She appeared like a woman of fifty years, instead of one of twenty.

They reached the top of the hill and halted. Then the spies heard the woman tell her companion where the entrance to the cave was.

They no longer had any doubts as to her identity, though they did not know who the man was.

"You take his horse and I'll take care of hers!" said Bob to Joe in a whisper.

They both aimed, and Bob said:

"One—two—three!"

Both rifles made but a single report, and the two horses went down, the woman uttering a cry of dismay as hers did so.

The man had a rifle slung over his shoulder and back, and as he went down he rolled over on the ground, breaking the hammer of the lock, rendering the weapon utterly useless.

"Reload, quick!" whispered Bob to Joe.

They reloaded their rifles, while the man, scrambling to his feet, unslung his weapon and stood at bay.

A moment later his eyes fell on the lock of his rifle, and he saw that it was broken.

With an oath he dropped it to the ground, and drew a pistol from his pocket.

The woman rose to her feet more frightened than hurt, and also drew a pistol from the pocket of her dress.

That she would shoot, the two spies well knew, for they had seen her draw and fire point-blank into the face of Oscar Dane.

"Throw down your weapons and surrender!" called out Bob, in clear tones.

"Down behind your horse!" said the man to the woman, dropping down behind his horse at the moment.

She was quick to follow his example, and in a flash they were both concealed behind the bodies of their dead horses.

"You'd better throw down your arms and surrender!" called out Bob.

"Never!" returned the man, defiantly. "I don't know who you are."

"We are patriots fighting against King George," returned Bob.

"But you are fighting against us just now, and we are not King George, either."

"You know very well what this all means," said Bob, "and if you don't surrender we can serve you as we served your horses. Which will you have? You may take your choice."

"You wouldn't shoot a woman, would you?" the man asked.

"Yes, if she does not surrender."

"I won't surrender!" said the woman, in very determined tones.

"Yes, you will, Mary Granby," said Bob.

The disguised woman—for she was no other than Mary Granby—turned pale as death.

"You see we know you, Miss Mary, and this time we have made sure you do not get away from us."

"Who are you?" Mary asked.

"We are patriots—that's enough" was the reply.

"Are you members of the Secret Band of Dis—"

"We are," interrupted Bob. "You are an enemy of the patriot cause."

"So are many other people in this part of the country," said Mary's companion. "Why don't you go around and shoot down their stock, and call on them to surrender?"

"When they come here on the errand that you did to-day," retorted Bob, in angry tones, "we'll serve them as we have served you. Once more, will you surrender?"

"No!" came from the man lying behind one of the dead horses.

Bob looked for a small part of the man's anatomy to give him a taste of lead; but he was so well protected by the horse that not a part of him could he see.

"I'll slip around t'other side," said Joe, "and give him a tap."

"Go ahead," returned Bob; and a minute or two later Joe was in a position to give the man a shot.

The bullet grazed his head so hard as to make an ugly scalp wound, and knock him into complete insensibility.

He threw up his hands and rolled over like one in the throes of death.

Mary Granby screamed:

"Oh, you have murdered him!" and sprang from her place behind her dead horse and ran to him.

She did not seem to have any fear of being killed herself.

Bob and Joe rushed at her from two different directions, and disarmed her just as she was going to fire her pistol.

"We have you at last!" said Bob.

"Yes, a poor girl," she retorted. "You ought to be proud of your achievement."

"We are very proud of it, Miss Mary," said Bob, "for we have found you to be a very dangerous enemy indeed. I hope there are not many more like you."

Joe picked up the pistol which had fallen from the hand of the man and stuck it in his pocket. Then he looked to the rifle and saw that it had been ruined in the fall when the horses was shot.

"Oh, you've murdered him!" moaned the girl, as she looked at the man lying so still on the ground. "You murdered his brother, and now he is your victim. May the curse of Heaven fall on you for this!"

Bob was amazed. He knew John Griswold and his brother Tom well. When she mentioned the word brother he sprang forward and removed the disguise, only to find the well-known face of Tom Griswold, the brave patriot soldier.

He was the picture of amazement when he made the discovery. He glared at Mary Granby, and she glared at him, hissing through her white teeth:

"Murdered! Whig murderer!"

CHAPTER XIV

THE ESCAPE OF MARY GRANBY.

Bob Ellis continued to gaze at the intrepid girl in silence for some moments.

Busy thoughts were flashing through his mind as he stood there and faced her. She was beautiful, very beautiful, and he did not wonder that for love of her John Griswold had proved recreant to his oath as a member of the secret band of Dismal Hollow.

He was a quick reasoner and as true as steel. His eyes flashed as he returned her gaze when she denounced him and his comrades as murderers.

"Miss Granby," he replied, "you are the murderess of poor John Griswold and his brother. Until you crossed their path they were true men and patriots. I know not how you worked such a spell on them, but I do know that you have made them turn traitors to their country. It would be nothing more than right to hang you for that alone."

She was disconcerted for the moment, and did not make any reply to his charge. He continued:

"I knew them both well. They were true patriots. Tom had distinguished himself in several battles, and John had risked his life time and again, shoulder to shoulder to me. You found him there and tempted him, and he fell. He turned traitor and acted as a spy for the enemies of our country. It is your work, and their blood be upon your head. You led them to their death. John loved you as never man loved woman before. May his blood cry for vengeance on your guilty soul forever more!"

Mary Granby gave a shriek and sank down into a death-like swoon.

"Good Lord!" gasped Joe. "Is he dead?"

"No," replied Bob. "She has only fainted. Let her alone till she comes to her senses. We must remove these two dead horses and poor Tom Griswold. Good Lord, who would have supposed that Tom would have turned against us as he did! I heard that he had been captured in that running fight the other day."

"So did I. He must have been released on her account. You know she fled to the British camp that night."

"Yes. Well, hello! He isn't dead!"

The man by the dead horse groaned and moved an arm.

Both youths sprang forward and knelt by his side.

He groaned and moved a little more.

"Joe, run and get some water somewhere!" said Bob. "He may come to enough to explain all about this thing. Run, quick! Bring your hat full of water!"

Joe ran several hundred yards along the precipice overlooking the Hollow ere he found a spot where he could descend to the level of the swamp.

He climbed down, got his hat full of water, and then climbed back up the precipitous side of the hill.

When he reached Bob again he found him talking with Tom Griswold, who was fully half restored to himself.

"Here, drink this," he said, holding his hat to the wounded man's mouth.

Tom drank the water, and was greatly refreshed. Then Bob bathed his face for him.

Suddenly Tom pushed his hand away, and said:

"Off! Don't touch me! You murdered my brother, Bob Ellis!"

"Your brother turned traitor, and acted as a spy for the British," replied Bob. "Have you done the same thing?"

"John a spy! I don't believe it."

"But he was, Tom Griswold, as we had the proof in his own handwriting, and that woman there was the cause of it."

"Is she wounded, too?" Tom asked, trying to rise on his elbow to look over at her.

Joe arose to his feet and went toward her dead horse, beside which she had fallen down in a dead faint.

"Good Lord," he gasped, "she has gone."

Bob sprang to his feet and looked at the spot where she fell.

She was not there.

They glared around in every direction. She was nowhere in sight.

"She has given us the slip!" exclaimed Bob.

"I hope she has," said Tom Griswold.

"You had better not say much if you want to live long," said Bob, his eyes flashing. "She must have gone into the bushes there, Joe. Run all through 'em, and if you can't stop her when you see her, brain her with your rifle. Don't let her get away."

Joe dashed into the bushes and Bob turned again to the prisoner, who was now sitting upon the ground, leaning against his dead horse.

"You are brave men to thus pursue a girl," remarked Tom.

"Shut up! She is worse than any Tory or redcoat in America. She ought to be hanged. Do you know her, Tom Griswold?"

"Yes. Mary Granby is the niece of Silas Holmes, one of the best patriots in Virginia."

"Yes, that's true. Yet she is a rank Tory. She has been acting as a paid spy for the British all along. John fell in love with her, and she made him act as a spy with her. We captured a British spy with a copy of a report written by John."

Tom Griswold glared up at Bob and said:

"I don't believe it."

"I don't care whether you do or not. She also made him tell her of our secret band and its place of meeting, which we all swore, on pain of death, never to do. He turned traitor all over, and she is the cause of it all. Do you know John's handwriting?"

"Yes."

"Would you believe it were you to see the report of his which we captured on a British spy?"

"No, for it is forged. I don't believe John could do such a thing."

"You won't believe that he has made a traitor out of you, either. I suppose?"

"No!"

"Yet you came here with her in disguise to spy out our hiding place. Thank God we know how to deal with traitors!"

"You must not call me a traitor, Bob Ellis!" said Tom, angrily. "I am not a traitor any more than you are!"

"Well, to save yourself from the death of one you'll have to explain your visit here in disguise in a way to show that you were not trying in some way to injure an organization which is fighting for the liberties of America."

"Who will try me?" the prisoner asked.

"The patriots whom you have been spying on."

"I have not been spying on anybody," said Tom.

"Well, Joe and I will swear that we found you in disguise, with Mary Granby, who was telling you about our hiding place when we shot your horses. Of course, you'll have to explain all that. You may be able to save yourself, but I doubt it. Men's lives are not worth much in times like these, Tom Griswold."

"No, I should say not, since you and your friends murdered my brother," retorted the prisoner.

"For the same cause we'll serve you the same way. John was a traitor, and it seems that you are, too."

"I can't see anything of her, Bob," said Joe, coming back from the bushes again.

"Thank God for that!" ejaculated Tom.

"Then she'll be a better spy," said Bob. "She's harder to hold than an eel."

"Yes, I am," said Mary Granby, who felt keenly the fact that they had both been outwitted by a woman.

They bound the prisoner and blindfolded him so that he could not see where they led him. Then he was led up to the cave by the way of the trail up the hollow at the base of the hills.

Inside the cave they made him even more closely than before, to make sure that he did not escape. That done, they took their horses and returned to the top of the hill, where they used their two horses to drag the two dead ones a mile away from the spot.

Having removed the carcasses, they resumed their watch on the hill, fearing that Mary Granby would return with a force large enough to force an entrance to the cave.

But the day waned, and the gloom of night again settled down upon that gloomiest of all places in Virginia—Dismal Hollow.

CHAPTER XV

RESCUED.

Let us now return to the British camp down the river, where young Oscar Dane, the leader of the secret band of Dismal Hollow, was under sentence of death as a spy. The reader will recollect that a little before sunrise of the day following his trial by court-martial he was called for by a British officer and a guard of soldiers, to be led out for execution.

Young Dane had not ceased to hope that his comrades would manage in some way to rescue him. Somehow, one of his youth and spirit never gives up hope till the last moment.

They had marched him some two hundred yards toward the woods on the right of the camp, which was just outside their lines, when a young woman ran up to him, crying out:

"Oh, let me see him before you hang him! Let me see him just once!" and ere the guards could stop she had rushed up to him, threw off her bonnet, and cried out:

"Do you know me, Oscar Dane, you young traitor and murderer of my lover? Look at me! I am Mary Granby! I was John Griswold's promised wife. You and your rebel cut-throat murdered him because he wanted to return to his allegiance to his king. It is your turn now! Ha, ha, ha! It is your turn now! I am going to stand by and laugh as you swing into eternity. Oh, I have no heart now. My heart is dead. You shot it to pieces when you shot John Griswold to death up in Dismal Hollow. Hear me, Oscar Dane! I swear never to cease my efforts till every member of your band of rebel spies is swung off, as you will soon be. My vengeance shall never sleep. The roof above the heads of your parents shall burn about them. Ha, ha, ha! It's your turn now! Come on with him! Let me see him dance on nothing! Oh, it's worth a lifetime of misery to see this sight! John Griswold is avenged! He is avenged!"

The British officer was astonished at her words, and let her rave till he might hear all. She told things they had not dreamed of before, and now they were all eager to learn more.

At first the doomed young patriot was surprised at her sudden appearance.

But she halted at him her accusations, and said that John Griswold was murdered because he wanted to return to his allegiance to the king, he retained his corpse here, and asked:

"You admit, then, that John was aiding the British, as we charged?"

"Yes. He wanted to return to his allegiance, and for that you murdered him. It is your turn now."

"Yes, it's my turn now," said the young patriot. "It will come sooner yet. When this war shall have ended, you will think of all this, and go mad because you tempted to his death the man you loved. John was a true patriot till you urged him to turn traitor to his country."

"That is enough," said the British officer, interrupting them. "Forward, guard!"

The guard marched forward toward the woods, and Mary Granby moved along with them, as did a number of Tories, eager to see the hanging.

The rope was stretched, and Oscar looked up at the limb from

which he was to swing. His face was but slightly pale. He nerved himself to meet his fate like a brave man.

As the executioner was trying to throw the end of the rope over the limb a volley of musketry was heard on the other side of the camp.

The next moment the long roll beat summoning every soldier to arms.

The redcoats stopped and looked at the officer in command. The latter gazed toward the camp, and heard the volume of firearms increase, and the shouts of combatants grappling in a death struggle.

"The camp is attacked!" he cried. "Bring the prisoner along! Right about, march!"

They hurried away with the prisoner, and were half-way back to the spot where he had spent the night under guard when several hundred redcoats came rushing upon them, followed by a line of Continental soldiers at bayonet charge.

In a moment all was confusion, and the prisoner was forgotten.

He was overturned, being bound and trampled under foot. But it was but a minute or two ere he saw the Continentals all around him.

"Help, help!" he cried. "I am a patriot prisoner! Cut me loose and give me a rifle!"

"You shall have it, comrade," said a grizzled old Continental, whose uniform was much the worse for wear, stopping and cutting the cords that bound him.

He sprang to his feet, seized a musket which some redcoat had dropped on being hit, and ran forward with the Continentals.

But the redcoats had now retreated to the river bank, where the heavy guns of the shipping protected them. The Continentals had to retire out of range, and Oscar Dane went along with them.

Two hours later Al Stevens found him.

"Ah, we saved you at last!" he exclaimed, grasping his hand.

"Ed Marlowe rode his horse to death to get news to General Morgan. The Continentals marched all night to get here. Just look at them! They are almost tired to death."

The Continentals threw themselves on the ground the moment they were halted, and seemed to be utterly worn out.

But they were in the highest of spirits. They had beaten the British, and that was reward enough for them.

And the young captain of the Twenty Boy Spies had been rescued under the tree with the rope around his neck.

The secret band collected around their young captain and made the welkin ring with their shouts of victory. They had worked as they never worked before, and had succeeded even beyond their most sanguine hopes. The British had been surprised and driven to the protection of their shipping, and half a hundred of them made prisoners.

"Al Stevens," said Oscar to his lieutenant, "Mary Granby was there under that tree, taunting me to my face, and waiting to see me swung off."

"Good Lord! is she so hard-hearted as that?" exclaimed Al.

"Yes. She cried out a dozen times that John was avenged, and admitted that it was she who had caused him to turn traitor—just as a had suspected. She may have been captured. Go and see if she has. I'd give something to see her a prisoner once more."

Al went among the prisoners, but failed to find her among them, though several Tories had been caught in the sudden charge.

He came back to Oscar and told him that he could hear nothing of her.

"Then she got away," said Oscar. "We'll hear from her again, though. She swore a solemn oath that she'd never rest till the last member of the secret band of Dismal Hollow was swung as I was about to be."

"Then we'll be sure to capture her some day," remarked Al. "I wonder what her old Uncle Silas will say when he hears that she is in the British camp, the most bitter of all the Tories in America!"

"It will break his heart, for he is as true a patriot as ever lived. Hello! they are going to move."

The Continentals were ordered under arms again, and in a few minutes were falling back with their provisions and such plunder as they could take away with them.

"I reckon they have heard some news of some kind which caused it," said Al.

"Yes, of course."

A little later it was ascertained that the British were landing reinforcements which another ship brought up from below. The Continental officers knew it would not do to expose their men in a fight against fresh troops. They had made a forced march all night, and had won enough to pay them for their trouble.

They marched fast, and ere the British were ready to attack them they were several miles away.

But the Twenty Boy Spies were in the saddle now, watching the enemy—that is, eighteen of them were. Bob Ellis and Joe Scranton were up at Dismal Hollow guarding the cave.

Every move made by the redcoats was reported to Oscar, who sent word to the American officers, if he thought it important enough.

When night came both armies went into camp. The Americans were almost too tired to cook supper, and many a poor soldier preferred to rest and sleep to getting something to eat.

All through the night the secret band hovered about the British camp, watching like hawks every movement made.

Suddenly, along about two hours before daylight, the redcoats were called up from their blankets without any noise being made.

Silently they fell into line by the light of their smoldering campfires, and started in the direction of the American camp six or seven miles away.

Oscar Dane saw the movement and signaled to his band.

They came around him.

"Come on. They are going to attack the Continentals. We must warn them of their danger. Come—slow at first till we get out of hearing," and he led the way for a mile or so at a slow pace. Then he called out to them:

"Now! Ride for your lives and liberty!"

It was a wild night ride. But every inch of the road was familiar to the band. They knew just where the Americans were encamped, and how to get there.

On, on they rushed as if the liberties of the colonies depended on their reaching the goal at a given time. The brave boys said not a word as they dashed forward. It was not a time to talk. It was a time for action, and they were now in the midst of action.

By and by they came in sight of the American campfires. A few moments later they heard the hoarse voices of a couple of sentries halting them.

"Lead us to the general's tent at once, on your lives," said Oscar Dane to the sentinels.

"This way, then," said the corporal of the guard, hurrying away, followed by the entire band.

The boys were ushered into the presence of the general. Dane communicated the news of the near approach of the enemy and orders were given to break camp and retreat, as the invading force was too strong for them.

The Twenty Boy Spies were soon in the saddle and started back to Dismal Hollow.

The next day Tom Griswold's trial came off. He was strongly convinced he was in the wrong and had been deceived by Mary Granby. He pleaded guilty and begged forgiveness of the boy spies. They forgave him with the understanding that he was on a sort of parole and was not to engage in any engagements against his friends. He readily consented, and promised to help them all he could.

One day the boy spies captured a spy with a number of despatches and carried him before General Morgan.

CHAPTER XVI

THE TORY SPY.

General Morgan was at a loss beyond words to express at the reception of the captured despatches.

"You have done your country a service," he said to the young captain of the secret band of boy spies, "which none but the devotion of the future may be fully able to realize. No one could have penetrated this valley. I had forward them to the command at once," with a report of how they were captured."

Oscar Dane had to tell the boys what the old general had said, and they were much rewarded for their trouble in the satisfaction derived from the general's praise.

Oscar had learned from the bearer of the despatches that Cornwallis' army was but two days' march away.

"We'll have trouble enough now, boys," he said to them. "Eight thousand redcoats is a big army. They will have things their own way till General Washington and the French allies come."

"Yes, and the Tories will get very saucy and troublesome," remarked Ed Marlowe.

"Well, we must go on with our work if a million or redcoats come," said Oscar. "Go in twos and meet them, and be careful not to get into any trouble."

They glided away, and for the next three days Oscar was kept very busy receiving reports from them, which he sent immediately to the patriot general.

One day Ed Marlowe said to Oscar Dane that he had made the discovery that the Tories had an organization not unlike the Secret Band of Dismal Hollow.

"How many do they number?"

"Some twenty-five or thirty, I believe, though I am not sure. I heard them speak of us, and the service they had done to the king's troops. But they seem to think that the greatest service that they could do the King would be to kill or capture all of our band."

"Ah, then we have indeed made ourselves felt," said Dane.

"It would seem so," assented Ed.

"Well, we may give them a chance to capture us, or do worse. Since the whole British army is here we shall have no further use for the hiding place in Dismal Hollow. Send one of the boys up there to tell the two guards to lock up the cave and join us at once. We shall need every member now."

Ed Marlowe lost no time in dispatching the messenger for the other two up at the cave.

Two days later the three came back together, and at once entered on active duty.

The Continentals and French were now coming down the river road, and the patriots everywhere rejoiced. Washington himself was leading them. Young Lafayette was leading the French. Rochambeau was there, too, with the new French troops just arrived from France.

Oscar Dane was the busiest young patriot in Virginia at the time the Continentals were hastening to give battle to the British army. Every hour in the day or night the band of twenty spies were bringing him in reports of the least movement made by the enemy.

"Who is this Oscar Dane?" General Washington asked of Lafayette, who had been in Virginia some weeks ahead of him.

The young French general told the commander-in-chief that the band of Twenty Boy Spies had done more service than all the scouts and spies combined.

Word was sent to Oscar at once that the commander-in-chief wanted to see him.

He lost no time in putting in his appearance at headquarters, where, on being introduced, the great general extended his hand to him and said:

"My young friend, I wish to thank you in the name of the Continental Congress for what you have done for the cause. Tell your brave comrades that their work is appreciated by the commander-in-chief, who will shake hands with them on the first opportunity."

"We have tried to do our duty, your excellency," said Oscar, blushing like a schoolgirl.

Oscar Dane went out from the presence of Washington that day the proudest man in America. Such praise from such a man was worth all the perils through which he and his comrades had passed.

When he told the young spies what the commander-in-chief had said to him, they were as proud as he was when he had been introduced to the great general and there to work harder and ever better to bring about the triumph of the cause for which they were fighting.

That night Bob Ellis received a foraging party, and sent word to Oscar Dane.

Oscar Dane hastened to lay the information before the commander-in-chief. He was in the tent, and was asked if he was familiar with the country down that way.

"I know every inch of it," he replied.

"Then you can act as guide for Colonel Cruger?"

"Yes, your excellency."

He was turned over to Colonel Cruger, who immediately set out with a detachment on horse to intercept the foraging party from the British camp.

They were off while the stars were yet shining. A man's arm was stretched out to Oscar, volunteered to go along as guide, so he knew every inch of the country.

"So do I," said Dane, "but I don't know you. What's your name?"

"Will Moreland, and I know you, Oscar Dane," replied the man.

"I know the Morelands. There are two families, both good patriots. Which one do you belong to?"

"Douglass Moreland is my uncle," said the man.

Oscar Dane turned to a patriot officer and whispered:

"I believe that man is a spy. You had better have him arrested."

In another minute the man was followed and arrested.

Oscar did not have time to go to headquarters to appear against him, as he had to accompany Colonel Cruger in haste.

They made a forced march, and struck the road leading south from Yorktown a couple of hours before the foraging party did.

There they formed an ambush for the reception of the redcoats. But the redcoats never came. Ed Marlowe had the mortification of seeing the young leader of the Tory band of spies and one of his followers making off with full information of the trap which had been set.

CHAPTER XVII

THE YOUNG TORY LEADER.

"Come, boys," said Oscar to his band. "Let's see if we can't catch some of those spies. We ought to be able to come up with some of them. They are running around pretty lively now, and maybe we'll run across them."

When night came on they made their way toward the British lines.

There they divided in parties of two each, and went in quest of whatever would be of service to the patriot cause in the way of news.

They found the redcoats in the deepest anger over the fact that their plan of the foraging party had been found out ere the party had started.

The young patriots saw that they were caught inside the lines with but little chance of getting out before morning—the two who had got over during the night."

But they were not the ones to run from danger. They moved about the camp and picked up such information as they could, and then laid themselves down before a camp-fire and fell asleep.

One of them was awakened by a party of young Tories, who were standing around the fire talking over an adventure they had just passed through outside the lines somewhere.

Their leader was a dark, handsome youth of not more than eighteen or possibly twenty years of age. His eyes flashed as he spoke in low tones to his comrades.

"Bear this in mind," he said, "that we want to meet the secret band of Dismal Hollow and kill or capture the whole of them. Of course we must not neglect any duty we owe the service, but just now the king's army is strong enough to defy all the rebels in Virginia; hence we can afford to hunt a little on our own account."

"And you are right. That is what has helped that young band of rebel spies along so well. They are here, there, and everywhere, at the same time. Ah, if I had a band of such spirits at my back I'd sweep through the rebel settlements like a tornado."

"So would I, captain," said the young Tory leader, his fine black eyes snapping. "All I want is some brave men to follow me."

"Then I'll lead you where we'll meet them to-morrow," said he. "I'll burn houses after I see one of the parents of those young cut-throats. That will bring them after us in a body, then we can make mincemeat of them. Will you follow me—all?"

"Yes, yes! to the death!" they all answered.

"Then I shall be the happiest man in the king's service to-morrow. Let's lie down and sleep till sunrise, for we shall have work to do ere the sun goes down" and the young leader lay down on the ground with his feet toward the fire, and was soon soundly sleeping.

The others followed his example, and in a half hour or so all were sleeping.

By and by the drops of rain came rattling down upon the sleepers. The two patriot spies arose and crept toward some trees, as if to seek shelter from the coming deluge.

"Now is our time!" whispered one to the other. "The darkness is so great after each flash of lightning that they can never hit us even if they fire at us."

"Just what I was thinking. Come on, and we'll try it."

They crept on through the woods till a flash of lightning revealed the double line of sentinels. Then they halted under some trees and waited till a chance presented itself for them to get across.

At last they saw, during a vivid flash of lightning, a gap between the guards and they made a dash to pass through.

The sentinels heard them and fired.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SURPRISE.

A bullet whizzed close by the head of the foremost one. Ere another flash came they were in the woods beyond, and could not be seen.

They immediately pushed on through the woods, making the signals of the band as they went.

By and by they heard a response on the left, and stopped till the one making it was found.

"Tell all the others to come in," said the two returning spies. "The band must be together at sunrise, or before."

The signals were then kept going for two hours, by which time fifteen of the Twenty Boy Spies had responded.

Then they made their way to where Oscar Dane awaited them.

"The Tory band of spies are going out to burn the houses of the secret band of Dismal Hollow to-morrow."

"We'll be there and see about that," said Oscar Dane. "Call the other four in, and we'll be off at once."

It took them another hour to find the four. Then they marched four miles to a spot near the home of Joe Scranton.

Daylight came, and a little after sunrise the patriots heard a company of horses dashing along the road.

They held their rifles in readiness to fire.

The young Tory leader came dashing along at the head of twenty-seven men.

Suddenly a volley burst upon them.

The young leader's horse went down in the road, his rider going over his head.

At the same time fifteen of the others went down in death to rise no more.

The others fired at random and wheeled about, put spurs to their horses, and dashed away at full speed.

Oscar Dane and the entire band of patriots dashed out into the road and secured the young leader as he rose to his feet.

The boys sprang into their saddles, and the prisoner, securely bound, was placed on a horse, and the party started off at a brisk trot.

Ten miles up the road they met the advance guard of Washington's army.

Colonel Cruger saw Oscar, and asked:

"Whom have you there?"

"A prisoner—the leader of the Tory spy band."

"By the way, that prisoner you caused to be arrested the other day is still under guard. I don't think we can hold any court-martial for several weeks to come. I wish you'd send him up to Richmond to be kept till called for. He was in disguise. Maybe you may know him."

"Where is he?"

Colonel Cruger directed his orderly to show the spies where the prisoner was under guard, and the party followed him back along the line of march till they found the guard in charge of the prisoner.

"Hello!" exclaimed Ed Marlowe. "It is Dan Moxey, or I'm a Tory."

Sure enough, it was—another traitor.

They took him away and started, not for Richmond, but Dismal Hollow. They were in grim earnest this time in dealing with those who were engaged in plotting the destruction of their band.

It was nearly night when they reached the Hollow, and the march to the cave along the base of the hills was a weird one.

But they reached it at last, and the great boulder that secured the entrance to it was pushed back far enough to permit them to enter.

Lights were struck, and the two prisoners looked at such things that caused them to wonder at the strange place they found themselves in.

"Comrades!" cried Oscar Dane, "we are in our home once

more. Let us have supper, and then we'll attend to business."

CHAPTER XIX

THE TRIAL.

After the meal was over the table was cleared of the few dishes that were used and the prisoners conducted to the lower end of it.

Then the twenty boy spies sat down on either side, with Oscar Dane at the head.

Every one wore a mask on his face.

"The secret band of Dismal Hollow now sits as a court-martial," said the young captain. "Dan Moxey, you are charged with being caught in disguise in the American camp, acting as a spy for the British army."

"I was looking for my cows."

The entire band burst into a roar of laughter.

A mask arose and said that he had heard Dan tell a British officer how he could lead a force to a spot where the rebels would not be in a condition to make a stand against attack.

After questions were asked pro and con, Dane turned to the boy spies, and asked: "What is the verdict?"

"Death!" came from every member around the table.

"At sunrise to-morrow morning," said Oscar Dane.

Dan was marched away from the table, and the young captain of the Tory band was seated in his place.

"What is your name?" Oscar Dane asked.

"Never mind my name," was the reply. "Go on with your farce of a trial. I want to see how you will manage to justify my execution. I am what you call a Tory, captured with arms in my hands on the highway. Now I am a prisoner of war, and——"

"Hold on, please. Do you belong to the British army?"

"I am a loyalist."

"But are you a British soldier?"

"No."

"What is your verdict, comrades?" the young captain asked.

"Death! Hang him!" came from every mask.

"So be it. At sunrise to-morrow they both die."

"What was the use of all this farce?" the prisoner asked.

"You came here for the purpose of hanging me, guilty or not guilty. Then why go through the form of a trial? You do not deceive me or yourselves. Let me say to you that death has no terrors for me. I have sought it in vain. I dared not destroy my own life. I am not afraid to die. Words cannot portray my hatred and contempt for you, yet I would ask a favor at your hands which I do not see how you can refuse. I would be buried by the side of John Griswold, another one of your victims."

The masks started and glared at each other.

Oscar Dane sprang up and made his way to the side of the prisoner.

Their eyes met.

"You are Mary Granby!" exclaimed Oscar.

"Yes, I am Mary Granby," replied the prisoner. "You have me in your clutches at last, but I fear neither you nor death. I hate and defy you! Do your worst!"

"Mary Granby," said Oscar Dane, standing within a few feet of her, "you have been our foe without reason. You tempted John Griswold from his duty and made him a traitor to his comrades and country. He was caught in aiding the enemy as a spy, and was executed for the crime. You seduced Tom Griswold, a brave soldier who had fought under Washington, and brought him here to effect our ruin. He was captured, and at this table was tried for his life. He defended himself in a manly way, and when he was confronted with the evidence of his brother's guilt he had the manliness to say that we did right. Upon that we let him go, and he is now back with his regiment fighting for his country as he did in the past. You are a woman. The secret band of Dismal Hollow will not hang a woman. You may go. The blood of John Griswold is on your head. It will be punishment enough for you. You are free," and with that he cut the cords that bound her hands.

At the moment Oscar Dane cut the cords that bound Mary Granby's hands, Ed Marlowe cried:

"Bravo!"

Then the others hurried and threw up their caps.

Mary Granby seemed to be utterly amazed at the suddenly transformed animosity of the young patriots. Her color came and went; her bosom heaved and her eyes filled with tears.

By and by, when her sobs had ceased, Oscar Dane approached her, and said:

"Miss Mary, we are now your friends. We bear you no ill will. You have the secret of our hiding place. To-morrow we are going to give you a good horse, and escort you to any place you may wish to go, trusting to your sense of justice not to seek to do us any further injury. Will you have food and drink now?"

"Not now! not now!" she said. "Let me weep! let me moan! let me die! Where did you lay my John? Let me see his grave, and I will forgive all."

"His grave is here—come with me," and, taking her hand in his, he led her to the spot in the rear end of the cave, and showed her, by the light of a torch, where the body of her lover had been buried.

There she threw herself on the little mound and gave way to such a passionate burst of grief that tears came unbidden to the eyes of every member of the secret band of young patriots.

"Miss Granby," said Oscar, "you must eat and drink before leaving here. Your strength is nearly exhausted now."

"Yes, I will eat. You are as kind now as you have been cruel in the past. I forgive you—it is all over."

She sat down to the table, and smoked venison and bread was given her. They also gave her a cup of water, and set some brandy before her.

She took both and ate quite heartily, after which she said:

"Let me sleep. I won't put you to the trouble of leaving here to-night on my account."

"You shall have blankets enough for a soft bed," said Marlowe, and in less than one minute every one of the Twenty Boy Spies brought his blanket and assisted in putting up a screen in a corner of the cave. All the rest of the blankets were made into a soft bed for her, on which she slept so soundly that she did not wake up the next morning till near noon.

Then Dan Moxey had been hanged and buried, and she was told when she did awake that he had been allowed to go away.

After a breakfast and another visit to the lonely grave of John Griswold, she turned to the patriots and said:

"I am ready to go now."

"Where do you wish to go?"

"To my Uncle Silas."

They escorted her to within a mile of her home, and then bade her good-by.

"Good-by," she said. "I shall keep your secret. It shall go to the grave with me."

"We shall never doubt you," returned Oscar, and the band saluted her and rode away.

At last, on the 19th of October, 1781, Lord Cornwallis surrendered his army to Washington and his French allies. Nearly 2,000 men marched out and grounded their arms.

The surrender was the last act in the great drama of the American revolution. The British Government saw that it was useless to continue the struggle. Two large armies had surrendered to the patriots. The peace party prevailed, and orders were issued to the British generals to cease fighting.

The Tories were amazed.

Some of them were panic-stricken, for they had good reason to fear the wrath of some of their Whig neighbors.

Thousands of them went back to England or moved to other sections, where they claimed to have been good patriots all through the war.

The Twenty Boy Spies returned to their homes to be honored by friends and foes alike, for they had not burned homes nor murdered old men for their opinions. Some of them became distinguished as public men, others married and settled down as planters and lived happily.

True to the prediction of Oscar Dane, when he stood under the tree with a noose around his neck, Mary Granby finally lost her reason, accusing herself of having been the cause of John Griswold's death, and died insane.

Thus ends the story of the Twenty Boy Spies; or, The Secret Band of Dismal Hollow.

Next week's issue will contain "DASHING DAVE, THE HERO OF THE REBELS," A Story of the Civil War.

FROM ALL POINTS

STONES—NATURAL MAGNETS

In Nevada are found curious mineral specimens known as "sociable stones." No better name could be given them, since where a few are distributed over a level floor two or three feet apart they will begin to move toward one another to a common center with an alacrity that is ludicrous.

Campers first noticed these stones. They had used wrapping paper for a table cloth and weighted the corners with some of the stones spread over the level top of a boulder. A few moments later one of the men noticed that the paper was flapping in the breeze and that the four or five stones were huddled in a group in the middle of the paper like a nest full of eggs. He thought the wind was responsible, straightened them and added more stones.

The next time he looked around the stones were back in the heap again. Once more he replaced the stones and sat down to watch them. They began to roll and hitch along toward one another again until they were in a pile.

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR DISCHARGED SOLDIERS

The War Department announced on March 29 that many favorable responses have been received to the request of the Secretary of War that educational institutions throughout the country establish patriotic scholarships for men who have completed enlistments in the new Army. A plan is now being worked out by the War Department which will allow the Army to utilize the advantages offered by many of these institutions. Under the general plan suggested by the Secretary the qualifications for the scholarship are that the candidate be an honorably discharged soldier from the new Army, of excellent character, from one of the regiments allocated to the state in which the institution is situated and a citizen of that state. He must be physically and mentally competent to take full advantage of this opportunity. Some of the benefits which it is believed will follow the adoption of the scholarship plan are the perpetuation of names of some of the great sons of the respective states, the successful knitting of bonds between allocated regiments and the communities to which they are assigned, and the improvement of the educational system of the Army to reach higher requirements.

PRICE OF RATS GOING UP

Add to the casualty list of the 1920 attack of the high cost of living the sad news that the price of rats and mice is going up by leaps and bounds. Subtract the cash you can make with the old rat trap and you may have sufficient balance to pay the landlord for his ratty cellar.

For be it known, there is a serious shortage of

rats of all kinds, and the prices being paid are higher than ever in history.

And conditions in the rat market are very bad.

This news was recently given out by a Columbia University professor who says all this stir in the rodent market is due to the fact that so many mice were required during the war for medical experiments, that prices went up. This stimulated the breeding, and many were engaged in this work. When the armistice was signed the breeders were caught "long" on mice and they found themselves carrying a heavy overload, so the majority stopped breeding.

These facts were contained in the annual report of Dr. Francis Wood, as Director of the George Crocker Special Research Fund, made public recently.

So many of the breeders "closed up shop" that the present scarcity is the result. Despite the fact, the war is over, there still is need for mice for experimental purposes.

FIVE DIFFERENT KINDS OF TONNAGE DEFINED

The term "tonnage" in the shipping business has five meanings, according as it refers to deadweight, cargo, gross, net or displacement tonnage. "Deadweight" tonnage is the difference between the number of tons (of 2,240 pounds) of water a vessel displaces "light" and the number of tons it displaces when submerged to the "load water line."

"Cargo" tonnage refers to either "weight" or "measurement." The weight ton in the United States and Great Britain is the English long ton of 2,240 pounds. A measurement ton represents forty cubic feet of space.

"Gross" tonnage refers to vessels and not to cargo. It is found by dividing the capacity of the vessel's closed-in spaces in cubic feet by 100. A vessel ton is 100 cubic feet.

"Net" tonnage is a vessel's gross tonnage less the space occupied by crew, engine room, bunkers, &c. In other words, it is the space available for passengers and cargo.

The "displacement" of a vessel is the absolute weight in long tons of the vessel and its contents. Its "light" displacement is its weight without stores, coal or cargo. Its "loaded" displacement is the weight of the vessel with cargo, fuel and stores.

The Shipping Board, upon whose definitions the above has been written for the Scientific American, gives the following relative tonnage figures for a modern freight steamer: If a vessel has a net tonnage of 4,000, its gross tonnage will be 6,000, its deadweight carrying capacity, 10,000, and its loaded displacement, 13,550 tons.

A FEW GOOD ITEMS

INDIANS BECOME EVANGELISTS

Two full-blooded Indian evangelists from the Spokane reservation in Washington are attracting considerable attention in Southern California. They have appeared in the foremost churches of the different towns and cities and always draw crowded houses. The men are Chief Red Fox Skuihushu and Black Hawk, brothers.

Chief Red Fox is the Indian who rode his pony, Montano, a distance of 4,000 miles across the continent carrying a petition to President Wilson, asking for citizenship for the American Indians. He delivered the petition into the President's hands at the White House.

FARMER CATCHES DEER

E. N. Todd, a stockman near Paulsen ranch, Cal., reports catching a forked horn deer that was held icebound in the middle of Trinty River.

Todd believes the deer was chased by coyotes and ran out on the ice, breaking through when near the middle of the stream. The deer could not get out and was frozen in during the night, leaving only its head and a part of its back above the ice.

Todd summed Henry Paulsen, and together they pulled the deer out and took it to a stable on the Paulsen ranch, where it is recovering from the effects of the cold. When fully recovered Todd and Paulsen will give him an ear mark and brand him "J. P." before turning the animal loose again.

CARIO TO CAPE TOWN AIRFLIGHT FINISHED

The Air Ministry announced March 21 that the Cairo to Cape Town aerial flight was completed at 4 o'clock Saturday afternoon by the arrival of Col. Van Rynzvold and Major Brand in a Voztrekker machine, supplied by the Union of South Africa Government to replace the wrecked Silver Queen. Four airplanes were wrecked before the Carlo to the Cape flight, some 5,000 miles as the crow flies but nearly a thousand longer as the planes went, could be completed. The first start from Cairo was made the first week in February. Col. Von Rynzvold and Major Brand, who have completed the trip, crashed in the Silver Queen I, at Korosko, south of Cairo, on February 11 and started again on February 22 in Silver Queen 11, which had many adventures and finally had to be abandoned.

The London "Times" attempted to send a machine over the route, but after getting more than half way, though making four forced landings, it crashed at Tabora in what was German East Africa. On February 23 a Handley-Page left for the Cape, but crashed at Shereik, north of Albara, having travelled only a small part of the distance. A Royal Air Force machine which left Cairo February 25

had two forced landings before it had gone much more than five hundred miles.

The route followed was generally that of the Nile Valley to Lake Victoria Nyanza and thence almost straight to Livingstone in Rhodesia, Pretoria and Cape Town.

INTERESTING FACTS PREVAILING IN MANY LANDS

Man's curiosity is in excess of his power to interpret and understand; consequently he guesses, and when he guesses wildly and inaccurately others of a later date call his guess superstition. Long after people have clearly seen that there is no rational evidence for the thing believed the superstition lingers.

The thirteen at table superstition, which has spread to thirteen at anything, is an example.

The origin of the prejudice against this number is usually supposed to be the fact that thirteen persons sat down at the Last Supper, after which occurred the most tragic event of the Christian Era.

Hesiod says it is unlucky to sow corn on the thirteenth of the first month, and an old Norse legend says that the twelve great divinities were dining at Valhalla when Loki, the god of discord, appeared, and a quarrel with Balder occurred in which Balder, the god of peace, was killed.

The Friday superstition arose because the crucifixion is supposed to have taken place on that day. Some persons think that it is unlucky to spill salt because Judas Iscariot seems to be spilling it in Da Vinci's picture. Others think that it is because salt is a symbol of incorruptibility and spilling it is, therefore, a sign of broken friendships and general upsets.

There are some curious and very widespread customs of a superstitious nature about sneezing! People sometimes say "God bless you!" to the sneezer. In similar circumstances the Romans used to say, "Jupiter preserve you!" The Greeks did the same, and the custom was ancient even in the time of Aristotle, who endeavors to account for it in his Problems; but he evidently knew nothing of its origin.

When a Hindu sneezes the bystanders cry out, "Live!" and the sneezer replies, "With you." The Zulu thinks that sneezing is a sign that good spirits are with him; other peoples believe that it means that evil spirits are being expelled.

The prejudice about being the first occupiers of a new house is perhaps a dim recollection of our prehistoric ancestors' attitude toward a newly discovered cave. There might be wild beasts already in occupation.

INTERESTING ARTICLES

READS BIBLE FOR 24TH TIME

Resolving twenty-four years ago to read the Bible through each year, George Messick, retired railroad man of Georgetown, has completed the task for the twenty-fourth time.

He has succeeded in finishing the book each New Year's Eve, with the exception of one time when he was sick. Usually he starts on the first of the year and he has so divided the chapters to finish at the end of the year.

For many years Mr. Messick was baggage master at the Georgetown station. He is about 75 years old. He became fond of reading the Bible when a boy, having had it drilled into him when a small child. He is a member of the Methodist Church.

CROWS SAVED TOMATO CROP

A member of the Los Angeles Audubon Society vouches for the facts in the following case:

A farmer had forty-five acres of tomatoes. They were coming along finely when he discovered that tomato worms had invaded the field and were destroying the plants.

All hands—men, women and children—were drafted to wage war on the worms, which multiplied at an appalling rate. As many as 1,000 of them would be found in a single morning.

The fight appeared to be hopeless, and the farmer in despair almost resigned himself to the loss of his crop when the blackleg battalions of his rescuers arrived one morning.

A veritable cloud of birds descended on one corner of the field. At first he supposed it merely meant more trouble. In a short time he discovered his mistake. The new arrivals were after the worms and they got them, too. The loyal birds stayed right on the job for several days. A careful search of the field several days after they left revealed only three of the worms.

Not a tomato plant was disturbed by the birds, according to the farmer. He trucked his tomatoes to a nearby cannery which paid him about \$5,000 for them. If the crows had not arrived on time there would have been neither vines nor tomatoes left in a few days, so he credits them with having saved him the results of a year's labor, the cost of his plants, and the return of a neat profit besides.

WONDERFUL JAPANESE PAPER

Much of what we envy in the artistic life of the Japanese cannot be attained by us because it is the fruit of a national education of several hundred centuries. We must also, in the domain of pure technique, give up trying to equal the Japanese where

the perfection attained by them depends on natural products of the country that our own does not possess. Just as the production of the beautiful Japanese lacquers is directly dependent on the raw material furnished them by their own flora, so also the preparation of their paper depends on the incomparable quality of the material found in the bark of plants and mulberry trees that grow in their soil.

The Japanese plants are distinguished not alone by the advantages offered by the raw material. We must also take into account the mode of preparation, which in the course of the transformation of the flexible but strong tissue does not cut up the cells but softens them and separates their fibres by beating and stamping, as formerly, before the introduction of machinery, we treated flax.

The kodzu is one of the six most important plants whose bark is used for paper. The shoots of the first year are barked, and after the leaves have been removed furnish strips of several yards in length, which are cut into lengths of about a yard and tied into bundles. The bark is softened in running water and then gently boiled in water containing wood ashes. It is then treated with channeled mallets on thick wooden planks. The product is twisted and turned frequently under water until it becomes a pulpy mass. This pulp finally reaches the artisan, who transforms it into paper by the method which we have, so to speak, abandoned in our manufacture. The fibres are fastened together, not with animal glue but with a cement made of the roots of certain plants.

With the aid of a rectangular sieve of very fine bamboo fibres, the necessary quantity of pulp is removed, and after all the water has filtered through the sieve the leaf is partly dried, after which it is rubbed with a soft instrument on a plank and exposed to the sun until completely dried, when it is easily detached from the plank.

Japanese paper has many uses for which our paper is not fitted. It replaces in a surprising manner our window glass, the manufacture of which has only recently been introduced into Japan.

Domestic economy and costume made innumerable uses of paper. Extended in the form of cord it has astonishing strength. Gilded and cut into narrow strips it is used as embroidery. To it the Japanese braids owe their gentle brilliancy and that delicacy imparted to mediæval silks by their filaments of Cypress gold. Its incomparable constitution is closely connected with the Japanese arts of writing and painting, both of which use the soft brush where we employ the pen or the pencil. The paper, rapidly absorbing India ink, enables the writer to use his brush more freely and lightly on its surface than we can use our implements.

The Midnight Shadow

—OR—

THE MYSTERY OF THE SEVEN STEPS

By WILLIAM WADE

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER XVI (Continued).

Poor Fanny was terribly frightened. She dared not speak.

As she arose he caught her roughly by the arm and dragged her into the passage.

"Oh, Mr. Grady! Please! Please!" Fanny gasped.

"Please! Please!" he mimicked. "In with you. Stay there till you are wanted! But stay! I may as well settle the business now!"

He had opened the door of the room in which Fanny first found herself.

Forcing her roughly through it, Henry Grady caught Fanny by the throat and jammed her against the wall.

Fanny screamed.

Then he struck her a wicked blow.

Fanny collapsed and sank to the floor.

The old man bent down over her, drew a blue paper from his pocket, bit off the end, and shook into Fanny's mouth a white powder which the little packet contained.

Fanny gave herself up for lost.

Henry Grady stood over her, glaring like some wild beast until his face grew dim and misty.

The drug had done its work.

Once more Fanny passed into the realm of dreams.

CHAPTER XVII.

All Sorts of Discoveries

If Dick Ketchum expected to get anything out of that dandelion-digging fellow he soon found out his mistake.

Words were plentiful, but information was scarce.

All he accomplished was to find out that the man had occasionally done work for "de biga boss," who lived in de cellar."

Having appropriated all the coins and piled them up on the table, the detective gave it up, and he and Oliver started to further probe the mystery.

They found so many things down there under the old wreck of a house that it is hard to know which to tell first, but what they did not find was Fanny.

But enough was discovered to prove that the missing girl had been in this mysterious place.

For in the little room where at the close of the

last chapter we left Fanny at the mercy of the mad jewelry dealer, Oliver discovered a handkerchief belonging to his girl, and also her outer wrap.

The "forbidden door" stood wide open.

Inside was a room furnished as a bed-chamber in the plainest style.

It was Arthur's room, of course. And here was where the coins came from.

It was no buried treasure.

Set in the wall was a small safe, and Mr. Italian had blown open the door with dynamite.

The safe was filled with drawers, in several of which were heaps of copper coins.

The fact was these coins were the idiot's play-things. He spent hours each day arranging them. They had been provided for him by Henry Grady, of course.

The gold and silver had all been taken, and the copper and brass coins rejected.

But it was all a mystery to Oliver and Dick Ketchum then.

They found nothing in the room to suggest to them that it had been the home of the Midnight Shadow.

They returned and searched Henry Grady's room.

As the imprisoned Italian kept up an annoying chatter, Dick Ketchum jammed a handkerchief in his mouth, gagging him, and joined Oliver, who was running over Henry Grady's belongings.

These were mostly books and papers. Oliver found no trace of jewelry or money.

There was a desk in one corner which was locked. Dick Ketchum pried it open, and found inside a lot of bills and letters, also a number of small diaries extending back several years.

"I want to run over this stuff, Oliver," said the detective. "From the general confusion which exists here, and also judging from the fact that this Italian came prowling in, I have no doubt that Grady and those with him have pulled out. That is why the bread was not taken this morning. Try that door there alongside the bed."

Dick Ketchum had lighted a hanging lamp, and Oliver had the flash light.

The door proved to be locked.

"Tackle it with these skeleton keys," said Dick, when Oliver so informed him. "I'm finding all kinds of clues here."

"Of Fanny?"

"Not a mention of her, my dear boy, but where Henry Grady has gone there we shall find Miss Fanny. Wait until I have doped it all out."

The skeleton keys worked, and the door was opened.

Behind was a bricked-up shaft about four feet square, in which stood a ladder.

"Go on up," called the detective, and Oliver ascended. He passed through an unfastened trap door into a narrow space behind steps.

It was all plain enough now!

(To be continued.)

Bob, the Ice King

—OR—

OUT TO FIND THE POLE

By J. P. RICHARDS

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER XVI.

The Trail of the Biscuit

With tired dogs and their own tired selves to think of, there was nothing for Bob and the indefatigable Dr. Ike to do but to carry out the proposition put by the latter, to "lie up in the house of Lars Larsen until the correct time comes for the next move."

Fortunately there were plenty of provisions both for man and beast.

Bob also unearthed a case of a "patent fuel," sometimes used in the Arctic regions, made of sawdust and pitch in square cakes, which burn slowly in a little sheet-iron furnace.

There was such a furnace here, and over it they were able to melt ice, thus to get all the water they needed, and to make up a good pot of strong coffee. Ike then fried ham, and this, with pilot crackers and the coffee, gave them a good meal, after the dogs had been fed on food specially prepared for their use of which they found plenty.

But poor Bob put in the most unhappy night he had ever spent in the Arctic.

Sleep came by fits and starts, and never for any length of time.

It must have been the same with Ike, for every time Bob stirred he would say in his deep voice:

"Awake, dear boy?" and when Bob answered "yes," he would add:

"Come, now, go to sleep. I've got to stay awake, anyhow, so I'll do the watching."

But along towards the early morning hours both slept.

Bob was up about seven o'clock, with the same feeling of deep depression upon him.

He felt that if it was written in the book of fate that he had seen the last of the beautiful girl life would scarcely be worth living.

Ike was now sleeping soundly, so Bob fed the dogs and prepared breakfast, having everything ready when his companion finally awoke.

"I suppose, of course, we hike right back and look for a trail," he remarked, as they sat down to the meal.

"Such is the programme," replied Ike. "The case admits no discussion."

"Don't you think, Ike, it is up to you to tell me all you know about this Lars Larsen, for you evidently do know something about him," urged Bob,

"and I must say that your explanation last night were very unsatisfactory."

"I have nothing to add," said Ike. "But to cover the same ground again I will say that personally I never met the man. He is a person of good standing in Upernavik, and beyond that he is out for the Pole, same as ourselves. I know no more that can in the least concern you."

"I am not satisfied," said Bob. "However, I shall not urge you, Ike. You know your own business best."

"It isn't that, dear boy, and I must confess that I don't like the way you put it. But I appreciate your mind will add that my trouble last night had nothing to do with Lars Larsen personally. It relates to a man I believe to be with him now, will that satisfy you, Bob?"

"Yes, that relieves me in a measure, but it don't explain why Larsen should make Thyra, Sandy, and Orlok prisoners, and swipe all our stuff, which he certainly has done."

"I have heard him described as a very arbitrary man," replied Ike. "You must remember that no law prevails up here, and might is right. But cheer up, Bob. Explanations may come later, and the final outcome of it all may not be so bad."

And there it rested, for Bob felt that he could not press Ike further.

Shortly before nine o'clock they started back for the site of the camp, reaching it without delay or mishap.

And now came the search for a trail, begun under conditions most discouraging, for the crust of the channel was as hard as glass, and dogs' feet and sled runners leave little trace behind under such conditions.

They searched in the vicinity of the camp for half an hour without finding anything to guide them.

"This won't do," declared Bob at last. "They may have taken to the middle of the channel or they may have kept in close under the cliffs. We have got to work with some system, or we may spend the entire day at it and end up in being no wiser. I'll get out into the middle and work south for one mile. You do the same close in under the cliffs. Then we will come together and compare notes."

"Right," replied Ike. "Anything you say goes, Bobby. We are working for a common cause."

The channel at this point was about a mile wide. Bob struck out into it on foot, leaving Ike the dogs, although the doctor would have had it the other way.

Bob's theory was that either Sandy or Orlok would spare no pains to mark their trail if their hands were free, and he soon found reason to congratulate himself on the course he had chosen, for he had not yet reached the middle of the channel when he saw a piece of a pilot biscuit lying on the frozen snow.

(To be continued.)

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GOOD CURRENT NEWS ARTICLES

Tests made recently at the Navy air station, Pensacola, Fla., with kite balloons anchored to Eagle boats proved highly satisfactory. The experiment of hauling down the balloon to the deck with the ship making a speed of fourteen knots was accomplished without difficulty. During the tests on shore with a kite balloon at an altitude of 500 feet in a high wind, the balloon had its stabilizer carried away, but while swinging through an arc of some 200 feet the three parachutes attached to the basket opened, and these acted as tail cups, bringing the balloon into a safe riding position. This accident developed a new idea in balloon control, and it is considered that under similar circumstances a pilot might save himself from disaster by opening his parachute to act as a stabilizing tail cup.

Inhabitants of Mongolia are great meat eaters, living in some cases entirely on mutton. It is not uncommon for a Mongol to consume 10 pounds of this meat at one sitting. He also compares other foods by asking if they are as good as mutton. The Mongol puts mutton fat in his tea, which is prepared with milk from the poorest grade of tea, pressed into bricks. He drinks enormous quantities of this, 30 cups a day being no uncommon amount for an adult. The natives eat whenever opportunity comes, there being no regular meal hours.

Water is scarce in Mongolia, a few wells along the caravan route furnishing the entire supply. During the winter and spring the camel is the only animal that can cross the desert and subsist on the dried up grasses. At this season of the year blocks of ice are carried for water supply, and in other seasons two large tubs are carried on each camel, one tub on each side.

Since last September commercial airplanes in England have carried 4,201 passengers and 50,000

pounds of freight, a total of 84,428 miles without injury to a person or a single loss of goods, according to Handley Page, one of the leading aircraft constructors of Great Britain and of the world. The passenger traffic between London and Paris, according to this great authority, is \$60 per passenger, while a charge of 50 cents per pound is made for freight. "The influence of air transport is going to be enormous in the world's development, especially in the United States, where there are such great distances," states Mr. Page. "Distances are measured generally by the time it takes to go from one point to another. The distance of 1,000 miles between New York and Chicago makes no impression on a business man; he knows only about the 20 hours by train. By airplane the two cities would be seven or eight hours apart, which would thus move the Western City in point of time to the position of Syracuse by rail."

GRINS AND CHUCKLES

"What's Cholly doing since he graduated?" "He's a bank runner." "He ought to make good at that. He took many interscholastic prizes for running."

"I'm sure I could fill the job. I got used to having a lot of men under me when I was in the Army." "Ah, a colonel, perhaps." "Er—no—not exactly. Private. But I used to sleep in the top tier of bunks in the guard house."

"Yes, my dear, that is a man-of-war." "How splendid! And what is that little one just in front?" "Oh, that's just a tug." "Oh, yes, a tug-of-war. I've heard of them."

"Mr. Grumpus thought he would cure a borrowing neighbor of a bad habit." "Proceed." "When the neighbor sent over one morning to borrow a hammer, Mr. Grumpus sent him a check to buy one." "How did the scheme work?" "The neighbor expressed his thanks, and the next day wanted to borrow a lawn mower."

His car had collided with a telegraph pole. A crowd gathered round. "I think my collarbone is broken," he said to the policeman who bent over him. "If that's all, yer in luck," growled the officer. "Shure, 'twas break-neck speed ye was goin' at."

"How on earth could my watch have gotten from the side of the bureau, where I laid it, to the other?" "Why, dear boy, have you never seen a watch spring?"

Mr. Weekend—Yes, my dear; when I come to think of it, it is a pleasure to pack your trunk. Mrs. Weekend—Why the pleasure? Mr. Weekend—To think that I'm not Solomon and have to pack 700 trunks for my wives.

GOOD READING

CANNED BEANS KILL HENS

Although regretting the loss of all the laying hens in her flock, Mrs. Swan Johnson, of Klamath Falls, Ore., is glad that she fed the chickens the home-canned beans which caused the casualties, instead of giving them to her family.

When the jar was opened the appearance and odor of the contents decided Mrs. Johnson against them and she threw them in the chicken yard. Next morning thirteen hens were dead. Three setting hens, which remained on duty while the others were eating, were the only survivors.

FIND PREHISTORIC HOUSE

Believed to have been overwhelmed in a pre-historic volcanic eruption, the skeletons of a boy and a girl unearthed in the volcanic bad lands near San Rafael, N. M., were brought to Santa Fe and are being prepared for shipment to Washington.

The skeletons were found in a white stone house in a good state of preservation. Expeditions from Washington have sought this house for years. It was partly buried in hardened lava. The skeletons were covered with a thick yellow plaster. Beside the girl's head were two large turquoise earrings.

WOOD CHOPPING NEWEST FAD

D. M. Linnard, manager of a string of California tourist hotels, has installed at Santa Barbara and Pasadena a common, old-fashioned woodpile, well equipped with axes of various weights and not too sharp. Guests are welcome to chop to their hearts' content. Linnard is willing to furnish all the wood they want. It was Linnard who brought wood splitting to the masses—that is the masses of tourists.

"Theodore Roosevelt inspired the idea," Linnard said. "I believe wood-chopping the best of exercise and a heap of fun as well."

HOW THE "DOCTOR" FOOLED THEM

Probably the most successful getaway ever made in the magic name of gold in Hayti was perpetrated recently by a white foreigner who traveled over the interior under the title of "doctor," which to the native means magician, big seer, superman, as well as big chief medicine man. This worthy, after a careful research into the requirements for making hard cash on the buried treasure superstition, came to the conclusion that he would do well to sell his services to the hundreds of native landowners who had grown up with the idea that there was buried gold somewhere on their farms, requiring only a man with second sight to locate the spot.

The "doctor's" little trick was well staged, and, due to poor communication in Hayti, coupled with superstition as to his superhuman powers for good

or ill, he was enabled to work it several hundred times and get away from the island before the storm of disillusionment could overtake him.

Before listening to a client who wanted to find buried treasure the doctor required an initial retaining fee of from one hundred to a thousand Haytian gourdes, the equivalent of \$20 to \$200. This was always readily forthcoming. The doctor then rode to the farm in question and spent an hour walking in a trance about the grounds. Suddenly the light would strike him. Amid much gesticulation, while the gaping negroes stared pop eyed in an awed circle around him, he demanded two barrels, two shovels, two pieces of burlap and some strong cord. He pointed excitedly to a certain spot in the ground, where he soon began to dig furiously. Shortly becoming exhausted, he turned the digging over to the natives.

After a reasonable hole had been sunk, the doctor placed therein the two barrels. All this was carried on with a proper air of mystery. The barrels were then filled with loose earth, the burlap tightly, stretched over the head of each, and the string knotted fast about them while the doctor muttered incantations. All this was satisfactorily mysterious in the primitive mind.

The doctor then rose and warned the natives on pain of damnation not to look in the barrels for two days, after which time said barrels would be full of gold coin. He added the fact with great emphasis that if any one looked inside before the time was up the gold would turn to mud.

The natives, well pleased with all this procedure, returned happily to their domiciles to await the day. When the day came the doctor arrived at the hole a little earlier than his clients and made clean cut slits across the canvas heads of the barrels. The natives came up in awed expectancy. They found the doctor acting like a raving maniac. He was cursing and swearing, tearing his hair, crying and rolling on the ground.

Between gasps he asked them why, oh, why, they could not have heeded his warning and received the gold that had almost hatched, when some curious mind had conceived the cutting of the burlap. He pointed dramatically to the cut burlap and dipped out a handful of the dirt within. Indeed, the gold had turned to mud just as he had warned them. The disappointed natives began to cry and moan. Then they pointed accusing fingers at each other. Some one among them had sneaked out in the night hoping to steal all the gold. Their mutual suspicions rose to fury against each other and in groups they waged battle.

In the midst of the commotion the smooth doctor, shouting that their chance had gone forever, rode away.

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

MOVIE STAR KILLED IN AVALANCHE

Hermine Koller, a well-known German moving picture actress of Dresden, was killed and several other actors and actresses were injured near Innsbruck, in the upper steppes of the Wildgratz Mountain when an imitation avalanche which was to envelop the group developed into a real avalanche, according to a report received here.

Mountain scenes were being taken by a German film company at an altitude of 9,700 feet. The scene was to depict a party of eleven persons being buried by an avalanche. Just as the picture was about to be taken a large real avalanche came down the mountain side and buried the company, killing Fraulein Koller and seriously injuring several others.

ROBBERS BEAT CRAP GAME

Seven robbers, unmasked and said to be known to their victims, broke up a crap game in a store in New Brunswick, N. J., and walked away with the stakes, estimated at "between \$6,000 and \$5,000." The players have made no complaint, for fear of being prosecuted for gambling, it is said.

Chief of Police Michael O'Connell admitted to-day that he had heard of the robbery, but said no complaint had been made. It is reported that there were between thirty and seventy-five men in the place when the robbers, driving up in an automobile, entered and stood the players up against a wall. They took all of the money in sight and then went through the pockets of the players.

LITTLE LAD MADE LONG JOURNEY

John Rose, a ten-year-old boy, worked his way selling papers and doing odd jobs from West Virginia to Topeka, Kan., according to the story he told the police the other night. He was turned over to the care of Father McManus, who took him to the Reform School, where he will remain temporarily while further information is sought concerning the boy's family.

The lad says he left home because he could not get along with his step-father. From West Virginia he went to Philadelphia. He stayed there a long time until he earned enough money to take him to St. Louis. He gradually worked his way westward from St. Louis to Topeka. Sometimes he had to "bum" his way on freight trains and baggage cars, but generally, he says, he had money enough to pay his fare. John says he is ready to go home.

The name Ross is that of the boy's stepfather, he told the police. He comes of a Polish family and says his real name is Guinness.

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